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MEN OF THE KNOTTED HEART

GLENSIDE (GRANT'S HOME).

When of a morning Grant would spy from his window Struthers's massive head appearing above the shrubbery, "Here's David," he would say.

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Biography

MEN

OF THE

KNOTTED HEART

A Recollection and Appreciation of Alexander Duncan Grant, and John Paterson Struthers.

BY

THOMAS CASSELS.

I count myself in nothing else so happy,
As in a soul remembering my good friends.

WITH 11 ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. L. STRUTHERS,
AND 5 PHOTOGRAPHS.

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TO THE BELOVED.

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INTRODUCTION

TWO faces are in my memory, and shall be as long as life lasts. The one is the face of Alexander Duncan Grant, as he lay in death, satisfied. Yes, *satisfied*—that is the word. As if, after life's fever, having come to the Great Repose, he had found it more than he had ever dreamed. For it is written, "I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness." The other is the face of John Paterson Struthers, Grant's choice friend, seen the day Grant died. It is transfigured, shining—the face of one who whole-heartedly, unselfishly, rejoices in his friend's triumph: it is the face of "the friend of the bridegroom." The look, the prayers, the words of Struthers in those days were shining indications of how a Christian will face that sorest of earthly sorrows, when death rolls its cold dark waters between his friend and him. For the friendship between those two was of a superlative quality. It was intense and spiritual like a flame. Their love for each other was very wonderful. They were David and Jonathan,

and called each other so; for when of a morning Grant would spy from his window Struthers's massive head appearing above the shrubbery, "Here's David," he would say.

Grant died on 27th January 1914, falling dead in his garden, while hastening from one duty to another. He was so remarkable a man, and so beloved, that it was universally felt in the town of his service that some account of how he lived and talked ought to be put in print. "I hope," wrote Struthers in his little paper, *The Morning Watch*, "God will put it into some one's heart to write a worthy book about him, that all may know what manner of man he was." And to write such a book, and make it worthy, there was no one so fit as this inimitable Scotsman himself. "Struthers on Grant" would have been, not only a joy to all who knew these men, but a singularly sweet and touching book. It could not have been otherwise than a permanent addition to our literature. And so, under compulsion of the desire to commemorate his friend's life and gifts, he began to collect material—letters, stories, scraps of talk. With others of his circle, I wrote out my reminiscences of Grant, gathering them from my diaries and from the notes I had kept of our talks together. With these, Struthers expressed himself as greatly pleased, saying that they truly conveyed some idea of what Grant was; and he read them to his friends

"Lord,
Spare the green,
And take the ripe."

The Prayer of Richard Cameron.

and to his Bible class. Thus he collected material, but he had not himself written a word, when suddenly, like his friend, and within a few days of the first anniversary of Grant's death, he too passed the Frontier. In the midst of his sermon in his church, while speaking of the love of God, the All-embracing, he fell to the floor, and in a few hours had slipped through the Goodbye Gate. It was as if Grant, satisfied with the swift and easy manner of his own flitting, had desired the Father of our Spirits to bring Struthers home the same way.

In the first number of *The Morning Watch* which was issued after the breaking out of war —the September number of 1914—there had appeared a drawing, here reproduced, with this comment from the editor's pen on the prayer "Lord, spare the green and take the ripe" which Richard Cameron uttered among the whinnying swords at Ayrsmoss: "Does not the prayer mean that we are willing God should take us away first, that they who are not ready may have time to repent?" So Struthers prayed Richard Cameron's prayer, and God took him at his word. But when, on the hillside above the town, we laid what was mortal of him that cold January afternoon, the air about us throbbed to the cry of bugles and the unceasing rattle of rifles, as men of the New Armies prepared themselves for their Imperial Task. I thought then how war is a great

obliterator. I said to myself, "Pre-war men, and books about pre-war events, are indifferent to-day. Men hear only the sinister voices of the guns; so now that Struthers has gone, no one will tell what kind of man Grant was, and of his beautiful life." And then I thought how great a pity it was, and, thinking so still, I have determined to essay something with my pen, that his friends, who loved him, might have some record of him, and that effect should, in some sort, be given to the heart's desire of Struthers.

But I cannot write of the one without writing also of the other. They were so linked together in life, being, in Hebrew phrase, "men of the knotted heart," and they are so heavened together in our memories, that they must needs walk together through these pages. And I must remember what Struthers said to me, when we were talking of his writing about Grant: "It must be as worthy and as true a book as I can make it, for I have to meet him by and by, and tell him all about it." Even so! I also, in the Place where there are no graves, shall meet Struthers and Grant, and therefore, as far as in me it be possible, I must make this book Worthy and True.

MEN OF THE KNOTTED HEART

I

IT was in 1883 that Alexander Duncan Grant, then well on the junior side of thirty, came to Greenock, as minister of Mount Park Free Church. In his Diary of that year, under Wednesday, 12th September, I find this entry: "Came to Greenock for good this evening by 6.5 train from St. Enoch's." Yes, it was "for good"—for the good of Greenock, and a great multitude of people in it, that he came that evening, sent of God, and called of the Church. And where did he come from, and what kind of journey had he had up till the time when he caught the 6.5 train in the evening from Glasgow?

He was born in Cullen, of the tribe of Benjamin, the left-handed clan of Grant. His father was a man of quick and generous temper, of whom Grant used to say that he was the ablest of

all the folk he had ever met. As many sons, speaking in all sincerity, say that of their fathers, I once, half teasingly, asked for proofs. From among a cluster of stories he offered me in reply, I select one to place here. The elder Grant was an unbending republican, holding that the nation could never attain to its strength under a monarch. This is now a discredited idea, but in the days of the elder Grant many shrewd men were convinced of it. And Grant remembered being present when his father was engaged in fierce argument on this theme. His opponent cited the case of the United States, where under a republic the foul growths of trusts and graft flourish unchecked. Grant told me that he thought that a bad knock-out, but his father at once retorted, "Kings have corrupted the world," which was knocking his opponent down with the butt of his pistol, as Dr. Johnson did.

Like many other clever men and admirable intellectual duellists, however, the elder Grant had his business worries, to which Grant himself used to allude with a touch of pride. "It is not a bad thing," he would say, "it is not a bad way to begin life, to have a father who undid himself by becoming surety for a friend." At least it is one of the things Mr. Worldly Wiseman is not apt to do. And so we presently find Grant himself earning salt for the pot by going messages for the local tradesmen, in the intervals of school hours.

One of these, a Mr. Mackenzie, gave him an account to collect, and at the same time a verbal message, which he may not have cared to write. "Tell him," he said, "that I want it paid, for I am needing the money badly." The boy Grant looked up at him with reproachful eyes. "Oh, sir, how can you say that, and you with so much money in the bank!" Mr. Mackenzie thought he would prefer another errand-boy, with not quite such a look in his eyes and with not quite such a conscience.

Four or five years ago, when in Dundee, I went to see Grant's mother. I found a very charming old lady sitting by the fire, glad to see me for her son's sake, but glad to see me also because I was a fellow-pilgrim on the dark hills of Time. Grant was greatly proud of his mother—and with reason. She was one of those gentle women, whose gentleness is not far off from greatness. When I asked him to tell me a story that he thought characteristic of her, he told that he remembered, when he was a boy, hearing her reading aloud, and his father crying to her, "Woman, woman, don't for any sake read that newspaper as if it was the Bible." Grant thought that characteristic of both his parents; of his father with his impatience, and of his mother with her respect for everything—even for a newspaper. She died, a very old woman, not very many months before him; and till that day of her death, all

through his student life and when he was in Greenock, he sent her a letter or a little gift, once or twice a week by a certain mail. And the postman who brought it to her never needed to knock or ring. There she was at the door, waiting for the message of love. And when he was going a journey, he had to send her a map of the route with his time-table, so that she might always know where he was, and where, therefore, her own heart was.

Perhaps I may be permitted here to quote extracts from the letters written by him to her, just for the quality that is in them of affectionate tenderness. Here are a few sentences from his note of congratulation on her birthday—her last as it proved :

> "I am very grateful to God for giving me such a mother as you have been, and for His great mercy in sparing you so long, to be held in love by us all and in respect by every one who has known you. I pray that you may be spared to us for many years to come, and that He will give you every day a happy sense of peace with Himself. I have many things to do to-day, and I must run off now and try to do some of them. But I will be thinking of you very lovingly to-morrow, though indeed I do that every day."

In those letters, he tells her about his work, about his friends, about his church, with a frank

simplicity that is often very charming, as for instance in this extract:

> "I began my Bible class last Sunday evening and I had the largest attendance I have ever had. But, somehow, I did not feel as if I was getting on well, and, when I got home, I thought over the matter and discovered that on one side of the hall I was looking down, not on faces but on hats, for I could not see the girls at all. I am going to try to get them to agree to take off their hats in the class. We'll see if they will agree."

He knows how proud she will be of anything that is an honour to him or a compliment, so he tells her stories of odd little scraps of encouragement or approbation that come his way. Thus he recounts how a minister, a delegate to the World's Missionary Conference from a remote part of Canada, had a young man in his congregation who once belonged to Greenock, and who made him promise that when he was in Scotland he would go and see "Mr. Grant," and offer to preach for him. "So, mother," he adds, smilingly, "your son's name is a far-travelled one." This is all very simple, but it is that love of mother for son, and son for mother, which, with death and time and the mountains, is indestructible among earthly things.

Perhaps on this theme it may be fitting that

I refer to Struthers's mother, for to him, as to Grant, his mother was the Sovereign absolute of his youth and earlier manhood. There was in Struthers's mother more than a touch of masterfulness, and he was very strictly brought up. One could see the effect of that to his last days, for he never shook off—if, indeed, there ever was need or temptation to do so—the stern Spartan ways in which his mother reared him. He used to wonder at the easy training of children in these Laodicean days; at the liberties they had, and the lavish way their parents indulged them. One can see in the pages of *The Morning Watch* how often he recurred to that; as for instance in this picture of "Boys that have something still to learn" — "The Boy that left that water running." I saw him once pick up a crust, which was lying near where some men were working, and carry it for a bit, to drop it at a quiet corner where the sparrows might have courage to pick it; — thus obeying the old suggestion to waste no morsel of bread, and at the same time doing a good turn to his friends the birds.

He told me that, when he was a boy, somebody gave him twopence for himself. It was the rule, and without exception, that all the money he received should be at once rendered to his mother, to be devoted by her to some missionary purpose. But twopence was a large sum—double or quadruple

what he usually received—and he thought he would spend a part of it. The shop windows had many tempting delicacies, and on a portion of these he laid out one farthing, rendering the penny and three farthings dutifully to his mother. She asked him where he had got the money, and he told her, with the strictest regard for truth, that a lady had given it to him. "Never," she said, "would anybody have given you such an odd sum as that. Where's the other farthing?" He had to pay it too, spent though it was; and the imagination can suggest how he paid. We hark to those things with interest and respect, examples of a way of life to which we cannot attain, the more's the pity.

Even when he was man grown, or almost, her wise strong hand guided him; and he, as well as Grant, owed much of what he became to the mother who bore him. She saw that he was well grounded in the Faith, and also in the tenets of the Reformed Presbyterian Church; and that therein he learned to walk before he ran—as this tale shows. Some time or other in his student days, he had become the possessor of a volume of the works of Swedenborg—whose mysticism was poles asunder from the stern Calvinism of the Reformed Presbyterian Church. Then, as now, such books could be had for the asking. Struthers, not having leisure to read it, laid it aside for a while. But, his exams over and his mind

at ease, he bethought him of the volume of Swedenborg, which it seems had piqued his intellectual curiosity. "Where is that book, mother?" he asked; "I want to read it." "In the fire," she answered; "I read it."

Yet, ere I leave speaking of her, I would like to repeat what Struthers told to one of my own elders, that on her death-bed she said to him, "John, it's mebbe no' richt, but I canna help prayin' for the enemy—for Satan himsel'." And so she passed, with a petition on her lips for the Black Heart of the Accuser of the Brethren, against whom throughout her life she had waged war without quarter. Which reminds me, that an old minister of my Church once said to me, that he knew of no finer manifestation of the Christian spirit than the lines of Burns—who in his life and creed was wide asunder from the Reformed Presbyterians—the closing stanza of his "Address to the Deil":

> "But fare you weel, auld *Nickie-ben*!
> O wad ye tak' a thought an' men'!
> Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
> Still hae a *stake*—
> I'm wae to think upo' yon den,
> Ev'n for your sake!"

And, if we expunge from those lines the mockery there, we have a fine expression of the thought of this rare strong Christian woman of whom we are thinking, who, as she passed to God, had pity upon the Eternal Outcast. "If

BOYS THAT HAVE SOMETHING STILL TO LEARN.
THE BOY THAT LEFT THAT WATER RUNNING.

It is good for us to remember that it is very easy to learn the habit of wasting . Further, you must bear in mind that every boy or girl that passes the running pipe, without stopping it, is almost as bad as the one who set it a-going.

ye then being evil . . . how much more shall your Father which is in heaven?"

To return to Grant: about the time he left school the family removed to Dundee, where he went to work as clerk in a lawyer's office. In a little article which appeared in *The Morning Watch* he told the story of his first day in his "place." This is the narrative in his own words:

> "I sat down to copy my first paper. It was the log of a ship that had to be written out for an action in court between the owners and the captain. Here was romance all at once. Surely this was to be a happy life. I was stopped in my work about mid-day, and told to go about two o'clock to another office for a document that was wanted. Then I resumed my writing till two o'clock should come. But I got interested in it again, for the ship was in the Mozambique Channel, and I forgot all about hours.
>
> "Some time about two I heard the hand-bell in my master's room ring one stroke. That, I was told, was for me. I went in. I was asked for the document I should have gone for. Well do I remember to this hour the feeling that came over me. I don't know whether I looked white or red or blue. Yet I must have looked cool enough. For I went out of the room as if I had the document in

my desk, and would return next moment with it. To me, life looked a mere tragedy at that moment. I had committed an unpardonable offence, I had no hope of a second chance in life. I took my cap from its place, walked calmly downstairs, and went home, never expecting to return. There was a quick end of my legal career."

He goes on to tell how his friends at home persuaded him to go back next morning, and, if the case looked serious, some one of them would come and explain.

"I returned. I took my place. I was asked to do trifling things for the clerks. I wondered. I was delighted to do anything, for that meant I was not being sent to the door. There was hope. But I dreaded every moment that single stroke from the bell in the inner room. That would be the bursting of the storm. By a kind Providence, though it often rang twenty times a day, that day it did not ring at all. I never spoke of my fault. And no one else ever spoke of it either. Months after, I found that when I did not return with the paper, they thought I had gone out for it. As I delayed, they imagined that, being a stranger, I had failed to find the place. They sent another

messenger, who promptly got the terrible document. To complete their charity, as I did not appear, they fancied I had quite lost my way and must have gone home."

The terrors of youth, like the terrors of childhood, are so dire because they are so ignorant. In after years, as may be seen from the way he tells it, Grant could smile at the experience, but, to a proud and sensitive spirit like his, it must have been a bitter humiliation.

But the years in that office that followed gave him an interest in law and lawyers, which was one of the savours of his life. He used to read with thrilled attention the reports of cases in the Court of Session and the House of Lords, and often, as he said, "profoundly disagreed with the judges." This taste for law machinery was shared with him by Struthers, whose knowledge of things and lords legal was of a curious nature. Many a time, in talk or sermon or in the cheerful pages of the *Watch* did Struthers illustrate his thought by a reference to what Lord This or Judge That said, or by the grumble of some prisoner before the Bailie in the Police Court. Very neat, it appeared to me, was such an application, which I heard him make the first time I saw him. It was on the evening of my induction to Wellpark Church, Greenock. We had assembled in the Session House, ready to pass in to the meeting; and I was standing waiting, when a tall man with

deep sad eyes, who, as Grant would have said of him, "was keeping himself ostentatiously in the background," stepped forward and shook hands with me, saying, "My name's Struthers." I turned round and presented one of my own friends—a minister whom I had brought with me for the occasion, and who I knew greatly desired to shake hands with the famous Cameronian. My friend began at once to praise *The Morning Watch*, saying that it was the most delightful of publications, and that there was no one but the man before him who could produce such a delicious titbit. "You remind me," said Mr. Struthers, his lip quivering, as it did when he was going to say something, and the sadness going out of his eyes—"You remind me of Lord Monboddo, the famous Scots judge. He was very fond of boiled eggs, and when one was put down before him, he used to rub his hands together and say, 'Show me your French cook that can make a dish like that.'" And Struthers cast on my friend a look so triumphant and so comical, showing such delight in his own story and in the implication, that my friend and I realised, encountering him thus for the first time, what a world of fun he was.

The head of the firm, with whom Grant served in Dundee, was Mr. Peter Reid, who was at once the admiration and the bane of the lad's life. For he early detected the fine qualities in his young employee and made him

almost a kind of confidential clerk, engaging him on delicate duties. This was distinctly an honour, and Grant came to entertain for his master the profoundest regard; while feeling, of course, that those special duties made life a more fettered thing than he wished. For example, night after night he had to go to Mr. Reid's house to write letters to his dictation. It was a curious experience. The old lawyer would begin, "Well, put down the date. Got that—yes,—Well—To Messrs. Paul & Anderson. Dear Sirs, Your favour of the 30th ult. duly received." Then he would lapse into silence—might doze perhaps, or take up a book, and would so sit for hours, all through the evening, and Grant would leave, when Mr. Reid's family began to gather for supper, with nothing more written of the letter than just those words. Of course, after the first experience he provided himself with books, and got a great deal of reading done, but the silence and the curious situation were a trial to the lad, as yet in his teens. Sometimes, with a kind of desperation, he would try to alter matters. After an hour with nothing written he would venture to say, "Yes, sir, I have that down, 'To Messrs. Paul & Anderson. Dear Sirs, Your favour of the 30th ult. duly received,'" and Mr. Reid would look over at him and murmur like an echo—"Yes, to Messrs. Paul & Anderson. Dear Sirs, Your favour duly received" — but nothing more.

This was the last story Grant ever told me, the last scene he described. We were golfing together, he and I alone—not keen on golf, but keen on our talk. A slight shower came on, and we retreated to the shelter beside the old skating-pond, and there, till the air cleared, we sat, and he told me about Peter Reid. "I know now," he went on, "what the old man wanted, though I never suspected it then. He had been warned that he would die suddenly, and he never permitted himself to be alone. I was there, when none of his family was available, to raise the alarm." After that talk on the Thursday I did not see Grant again, till I looked upon him in death on the Tuesday afternoon; and I have wondered if some premonition of his own so sudden summons recalled to his mind the precaution of his old master in Dundee.

II

ONE marvels sometimes, looking at certain men, however it could have happened that they became ministers. They give one the impression of having wandered into the Church by mistake. They are jewels in the wrong setting—real jewels or paste. Now, conversely, both Struthers and Grant gave one the idea that they were made for the place they were in—that they were fine jewels in the one and only setting for them. It is difficult for me to imagine Grant anything else than a minister, and a minister in Greenock. As an authority in matters of religion, as a conscience to the town, as a critic of life there was none like him; but as Struthers said of him, "He couldn't dunt in a nail," and he lacked every quality—especially the negative ones—which is necessary to a good lawyer. Nor, though Struthers could work with his hands and would have made an excellent journalist, is it easy to imagine him as anything else than what he was. Though I knew them only in the later years of their lives, yet I can see in the very earliest of their letters, which have come into my hands, this distinct bias in both to the service of the

Church of Christ. This was the work for which God designed them. And so, it is nothing else than by the direction of Providence that we find them, presently, fitting themselves for their life-work, enrolled as students in the ancient University of Glasgow.

Struthers was there some years before Grant, entering, too, under more favourable conditions; having passed straight from his studies at the High School of Glasgow to his studies at college, with his appetite for scholastic honours sharpened by his brilliant career at school, and with his mind bent to its stretch towards a student's work. Grant, on the other hand, came from a lawyer's office, where his mind had been detached from the study of those subjects necessary for a minister; and, besides, he had in Glasgow to support himself by doing missionary work. Yet his career as a student was more than respectable; only there was always present in his mind that touch of impatience, which a man who has seen life, glowing and free, often has for the artificialities of a university. This may be clearly observed in the following extract from a letter written by him, a few months before his death, to a young student:

> "My impressions of University thinking, as I recall it, is of rather parochial minds confidently dealing with larger than imperial questions. I was twenty when I went up, and you know I didn't bring an

imperial mind with me, but I had considerable practical acquaintance with men, and I could see singularly often that the student's 'reach' was much greater than his 'grasp.'"

But impatient or not, he did at college what he always did—his utmost. For an example, I recall a story of those student days at Glasgow. One of the professors, since then gone out into the night, was a man of great ability and fame, but whose uncertain temper and stinging tongue often gave his class uncomfortable hours. One forenoon, at the hour of that class, Grant felt very ill. The red-gowned students were flocking in at the door, and the janitor, Irish, and, like the professor, also famous, was standing on guard beside it. To whom, for they were friendly, Grant stepped up to say that he was going home, for he feared that he would not be able to sit out the class. "It's a wise man ye are, sorr," said the janitor, "for they'll all catch it warm this mornin'. The ould man fell out with his wife an' all this mornin', an' she's layin' into the cook an' the tablemaid this blessed minute, an' he'll lay into the boys here, jist whenever I shut the door. Cut aff home wi' ye an' be shut av it, Mr. Grant." "But no," answered he, "I've changed my mind," and he passed in, ill and hardly able to stand, to face the bad hour with the rest.

Long years after, when I also came to sit and shiver under that same professor, the Irish janitor, comforting me perhaps after some sore experience, told me the story, as an instance of how some students wouldn't miss seeing the great man in a rage for anything; but without telling me the student's name, having likely forgotten it. After another term of time I told Grant one day, as we exchanged reminiscences of that dread classroom of our youth. "I remember the incident," he said, "I was the hero. I must tell Struthers the coincidence of your hearing it from the janitor. Yes, I remember: that was one of the worst hours of my life." Which is a little story of a little affair, but a revelation of a big character.

In those days Grant did not know Struthers, the latter being older and well on ahead in his career. It may, indeed, have been that while Grant was at his classes Struthers was travelling round the world with some of his friends of the Allan family, after a career at college which had been a very happy one. He had found, when he came up, that there were two men who in classics took a place in front of him. One was B., a very brilliant student, who easily outdistanced Struthers to begin with. But dourness and grit told at last, and Struthers had the satisfaction of seeing his own name above the other's on the lists. Yet it is said that, of every three brilliant students, one goes out into the wilderness, and, of these three, B. was the one who went.

Struthers used to tell with solemn face that when they were in Professor Edward Caird's class they all went, along with the professor, to be photographed. It was the days of the wet plate in photography, and the process was tedious. Caird, to wile the time, had brought with him a book, from which he read to the students Dr. Johnson's opinion on suicide. This is the conversation as Boswell tells it:

> We talked of a man drowning himself.
>
> *Johnson.* "I should never think it time to make away with myself."
>
> I put the case of Eustace Budgell, who was accused of forging a will, and sunk himself in the Thames, before the trial of its authenticity came on: "Suppose, Sir (said I), that if a man is absolutely sure that, if he lives a few days longer, he shall be detected in a fraud, the consequence of which will be utter disgrace and expulsion from society."
>
> *Johnson.* "Then, Sir, let him go abroad to a distant country; let him go to some place where he is *not* known. Don't let him go to the devil where he *is* known!"

Some years after, when college days were all shoved behind them, Struthers met B. Said Struthers, in telling me the story, "There was no speculation in his eyes. He might have been a stoker brushed up for an afternoon off;

and all he said to me was, 'Do you remember Caird reading about a man going to the devil where he is known?' Next week," continued Struthers in his deep, awed voice, "he shot himself." And then, after a pause, he added, "The sight of the wrecks on the shore makes the sailor very thankful for his own safe voyage."

The third man of those three mighty students of old has attained to great distinction—to the very highest honours his Church can give him. In a letter to Grant, Struthers refers to meeting this old opponent of his, after many days. "He is a most impressive figure," he writes. "Told me my beating him the first year was one of the two sorest slaps in his face he ever got. He's had an easy life. And yet to have been beaten by me may be a degradation! Yet how many must feel degraded! Is that pride or humility?" If the reader will follow those sentences, and try to understand the swoop of the mind between each, he will have an idea of the curious quality of Struthers's thinking. I have compared it to the flight of a lapwing, which swoops from side to side across the pasture lands, ever turning and stooping and rising, now gleaming light and now dark, always swift, crested and watchful. So Struthers passed from fun to earnest, from wit to austerity, from pride to humility—and of this lapwing flight the extract just quoted is an example.

It is not at all necessary to follow Grant's

career at College in detail. It is enough to say that these were years of fine dreaming, and during which he laid the foundation of that vast knowledge of literature, which made him the best read man I have ever met. At last came 1883—a year of years for him. On the first Sunday of January he preached in Mount Park, Greenock—a student in the closing months of his curriculum. The Mount Park people liked him, and, the church being vacant, remembered him. In his Diary, under February 4th of that year, he quotes Aristotle: "Men wake before they open their eyes." What thoughts moved him in writing that sentence who shall say? For it is always a solemn thing when a student is leaving college. He is parting from a life very pleasant and secure; a circle is being broken for ever. The dream is over; it is time to wake. Some thoughts like these may have been in his mind. And then, on February 25th, he preached the trial sermon, which every student had to deliver before a professor. The professor who heard it was Dr. Candlish, son of the great Candlish. He was the most simple-hearted and guileless of men. "It is very good of you, Dr. Candlish," I said once to him, thanking him for some services he had done, "to do all that for me." "Yes, I know it was," he replied in his gentle way, the truth having made him free of all affectations and insincerities. So his criticism—for the professor always criticised—of Grant's sermon was quite pleasantly frank.

"I am sure," he said—"I am sure, Mr. Grant, you will write a better sermon on the text than that." Now the text was "Bear ye one another's burdens." And Grant did write a better sermon on it—he wrote the sermon of his life. His whole life was a commentary—a sermon—on bearing the burdens of others.

Regarding this point, let me quote what Struthers wrote of him in *The Morning Watch*:

> "A few days before his death a message boy asked Mr. Grant to help him lift a large basket on to his head. When he took hold of it, he thought it was much too heavy for the boy, and said, 'You can't carry a load like that: I'll carry it for you.' And carry it he did, a long way, and past his own house, till he came to the place the boy was bound for.
>
> "A minister-friend of his, a brother Presbyter, to whom I told this story, said, 'I am afraid a good many of us were guilty of giving Mr. Grant our burdens to bear.' I think there is much truth in that."

So it can be seen that, when he died, men who knew him thought of him as a burden-carrier. And thus was fulfilled his old professor's opinion that he would preach a better sermon on "Bear ye one another's burdens."

And then, when the valedictory speeches

were spoken and the last hand-clasps given, the little group of students, who had lived together and loved and helped each other for so many years, separated—Bain, one of them, to follow Livingstone's footsteps and die like him in Africa; Denney, to that excogitation of spiritual thoughts which has earned him the thanks of the Churches; Grant, to his life-work in Greenock. It was, it must be admitted, a very discouraged Grant which emerged from College. He had waked, and he had opened his eyes. Stepping out into the world, he had taken a good look round him, and in his Diary of those early days of April I find this sigh, "Saddened by hopeless worldliness." And then, characteristically, he beholds God in little things, in gentle, trivial incidents which many a man would miss. "See two young men with open Bible under a gas-lamp at night: and, passing two men in a quiet street, overhear them saying, 'He told me he was born again' —thanked God and took courage." This is very like the man. He had a keen eye and ear for street incidents and talk; and many a lovely encouragement and many a quaint story thus came his way.

III

QUITE a group of churches each wanted him for minister. There was one in London, and another in the North, which actually called him, and several others who were only kept from calling him by the fact that he was already so well called. Looking at the choice he had and at the condition of Mount Park then, it must be said that he took the smallest cake on the plate. He would have done better for himself had he listened to other voices—but then it never was his way to look at what was best for himself.

Shortly after his death one of his people said to me, that, if ever I wrote anything about Mr. Grant, I was to be sure and tell of his generosity, of his disregard of money ; how he served God and could not serve Mammon. This is quite a proper opportunity for me to do so ; for he was elected to Mount Park on the 18th of June, and, for months before, he had known of the likelihood of that happening, but it was not till the 27th of July that he knew what his stipend was to be. Under that date he notes, in his Diary, that Mr. M'Kelvie, one of the Mount

THE BOY THAT LEFT THE GAS BURNING IN THAT ROOM AN HOUR AGO.

In an hour's time these three jets, use, say, twenty cubic feet of gas. Scarcely one penny's worth! True, but it is wrong to waste even a penny. The image and superscription on it are Cæsar's, the penny itself is God's. Besides, the boy who wastes the gas will be thoughtless and careless about most other things.

"But it doesn't come out of my pocket or yours either." Well, if a boy says *that* to you, nobody in this world will ever learn much good from him until he gets more sense!

Park elders, had just told him, and he adds: "Pleasant to think that call presented and accepted without a word about money." I fancy that he might secretly regret that the salary was not larger than £200 a year, in order that he might have the more to give away. For he was a great giver. It was said of him that he always seemed to be wearing a new coat, and that the reason was that he was always giving it away. Somebody presented to him once a Burberry, with which he was greatly pleased, but a lad he knew was going off that evening on a voyage, and, thinking that it might be more useful to the sailor than even to a Greenock minister, he insisted on the lad accepting it. Stories of that kind could be told without end. He had the knack of finding out people who needed help. As many said of him, "He was one of God's creditors, for he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

Some years back, when the town suffered a winter which for unemployment was one of the worst Greenock ever struggled through, there appeared, when the light was breaking, a letter in the local paper by one of the unemployed, testifying to the devotion and generosity of the minister of Mount Park, above all others:

"GREENOCK, 5*th June* 1909.

"SIR,—As representing a section of the late or recently unemployed during that unfortunate industrial crisis, which hit hard

> many worthy working men, their wives, and children, I think it would be very ungrateful indeed not to acknowledge one reverend gentleman in our town, and that is the Rev. A. D. Grant of the Mount Park Church, who so nobly and generously responded to the call of alleviating the many cases of sad distress which had been brought before his notice—practical Christianity and brotherly love."

The letter is signed "*1st Cor., 13th chap., 1st verse*," and the fact that the writer goes on to pummel the clergy in Greenock generally, as if half ashamed of his praise of one of them, is at once a proof of the genuineness of the letter and of the lavishness of Mr. Grant's generosity.

Nor was the other of these men of the knotted heart in any way behind his brother in this matter of open-handedness. Struthers also was a great giver, but in an entirely different way. To understand the difference, one must understand the attitude of each to money. To Grant, money was a thing of no great account, a thing to be thrown about, or at least to be spent and used. "I was born extravagant," he said to me once. Consequently, Grant's giving had an air of carelessness about it. He gave joyously and with no thought to what he had given. Struthers, on the other hand, was the soul of thrift. He had an income of £200 a year from his congregation.

He was offered more and pressed to accept it, but he would not. £200 was quite enough, he told them. But it was his aim to make every penny of it go as far as possible. He was a grand exponent of Scots thriftiness, and he lived what is now known as the simple life. I remember when he and I had each a joint to carve at a public Christmas dinner, that he came over and looked at my work. "It's very badly done," he said; "a joint should be carved always, so that it can be put down the second day in a decent condition. I defy any one to serve that joint, you have carved, anywhere to-morrow with decency. Come and see mine." And certainly he had so carved it, that what was left made a very presentable appearance. Scores of stories of similar nature are told of him, delightful illustrations of those habits of thrift, by which the resources of Scotland have been husbanded and developed, and the capital of her sons accumulated, by which they have traded and grown rich.

For another example let me tell this. He called to see a poor woman once, having heard that she was in need. She told him that the day before she had only twopence farthing in the house, along with a lump of coal, which one of her little boys had found on the street. With this twopence farthing she had bought all the food that she and her family had eaten that yesterday. "What did you buy?" asked Struthers. "I got twopence of butcher's scraps

and a farthing's stale rolls," she told him. He considered a while. "You could have done better," he said. "You could have bought twopence farthing's worth of peasemeal, which would have gone farther, and been a better bargain, and more wholesome than the butcher's scraps and stale bread." Those who knew him will recognise how characteristic this is of him. He was a great giver, but he regarded the spending of money as one of life's most serious duties, and that it was a Christian's business to avoid extravagance. Extravagance he held, indeed, to be one of the greatest of sins.

But in case these tales of him may give the reader an altogether wrong impression of the man, let me hasten to say again that never was there any one less penurious, more generous, more unostentatiously open-handed. The editor of the *Witness*, who knew him well, wrote: "His generosity to the poor, to the Church, to Foreign Missions, to Bible Societies, will never be fully known. He crucified self and showered benefactions on others." He would give anything, as he would do anything, for the glory of God and the comfort of men. Once, when he was in a bookshop, he spied on the shelves a copy of a notorious pornographic romance—a book most unclean. He asked its price. The bookseller wanted £4 for it. Struthers remarked that it was hardly the kind of book that a decent bookseller would care to sell, but the other said that there was a certain

demand for such books. Then Struthers offered to buy it. Ultimately he secured it for £3, 10s. and paid the sum. The bookseller carefully wrapped the volume in paper and tied it up, handing it to Struthers with a smile. Struthers took it, walked to the back of the shop where there was a fire, and thrust the package into the heart of it, standing there till it was quite consumed. When he came back to Greenock he told Grant. "Well done, old man," said Grant, "well done! You've made the world a bit cleaner."

It may be suspected that these two were critical of each other in the matter of their methods of living and giving, especially that Struthers should be so with regard to Grant; the suspicion is right. Grant considered that Struthers was over-burdened by his theories of living; and Struthers thought Grant to be needlessly careless both as regards what he spent and what he gave. In the mass of notes which he had collected for the biographical sketch of his friend, I find this in his own handwriting, evidently a note jotted down in a hurry: "I used to think him extravagant in coals." I do not know if he had some incident or saying to use in connection with that quaint statement; but, at any rate, the mention of coals suggests to me matches, of which Grant used to say that the great lesson he had learned from Struthers was how to make a match last three times. Often and often I

have seen him burning his fingers and his face trying—*à la* Struthers—to kindle the stump of a match at the uncertain flame of the fire. This sight led one of the ladies of his household to say that any stranger, seeing this, would have an utterly erroneous idea of him; and that he did not in the least live according to the promise of the thrice-used match.

When, on the evening of Wednesday the 12th September 1883, Grant came to Greenock "for good" by the 6.5 train from St. Enoch's, Struthers had been there more than a year and a half. He had been ordained at Whithorn in 1878, and had spent three years there. Long afterwards, Grant, for his friend's sake, went to Whithorn to see the church where Struthers was ordained, and the little manse where he had first set up his rest. Here is an extract from the letter, in which he reported to Struthers how he and his companion had fared:

> "First thing we did was to go after tea half-way up the brae, and in by the narrow road. We just walked about it and considered it and read the memorials of the brief ministries. Then the tenant of your old manse came out, and we had a chat. I just said I came from Greenock, but as I had a very bad blue-black eye" (the result of a mix-up with a bicycle, himself, and a young lamb) "I claimed no connec-

tion with you. I am greatly delighted with Whithorn, and, besides, I feel a most ridiculous power of associating it with you. This is a place I would just have expected you to be in."

That was written twenty years and more after Struthers had left Whithorn, and Grant does not say whether the affinity between the town and its minister of a score of years back was caused by the influence of the town on the man, or of the man upon the town. At any rate, Struthers ever loved Whithorn. He did not always like Greenock, for Greenock is just a naughty, heedless boy; but he always loved Whithorn, the place where he was ordained to the Ministry of the Word.

His little church there was full of curious people, as these little churches often are. There was Jess Shiels, who used at all hours of the day and night to walk round the wee kirk, according to the Psalm:

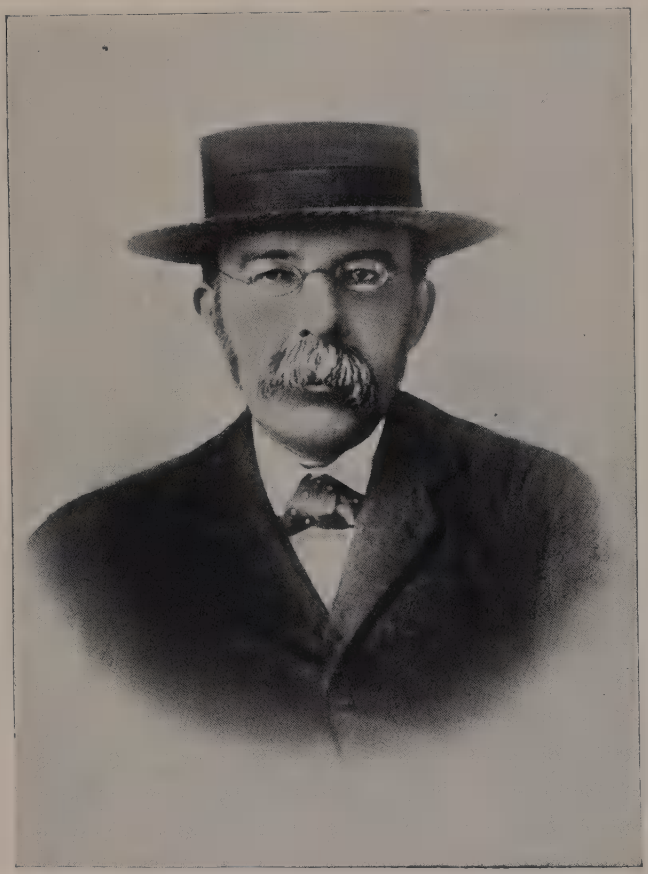
> "Walk about Zion and go round,
> The high towers thereof tell."

Only, there were no high towers to tell, but very humble walls; still, Jess knew every inch of them. She had counted all the stones and all the slates, so that she could say, "There are five hun'er and saxty-twa slates on the south riggin', and five hun'er an' eighty-eight on the north; and afore the last storm there were five

hun'er an' ninety-three on the north, an' five hun'er and saxty-three on the south." This surely is loving the House of God.

> "Thy saints take pleasure in her stones,
> Her very dust to them is dear."

On one of the very last times I met him, Struthers told me of another of those Whithorn worthies. He was a good man, and he had very definite ideas about the divinity of our Lord; holding that all power and knowledge were given to Jesus from the first hour of His life, so that He was able to speak all languages, —Glasgow dialect or Malay,—or could have made a steam engine with all the latest improvements. Struthers, being young then, attempted to argue with him, pointing out that there was something of a progression in His life, for St. Luke says that Jesus grew in favour with God and man. "Ay, Mr. Struthers," said the man, "I'll admit to ye that's an unfortunate phrase. Luke micht hae kenned better."



But dusk was beginning to fall, and there was doubt if he would make the runs in time. "It is a question," said Struthers, of "Adam or Eve."

IV

BUT at last, according to the will and direction of God, of Whom every man's life is a plan, Struthers came to Greenock and was inducted minister of the Reformed Presbyterian Church there, on 25th January 1882, to be followed twenty months later by Grant, as has been said. The two men at once drew together. They were of different Churches, but they had each an uncommon mind and a rare personality. They were also both very reserved, very shy, and very humble, of a humility that is not very far off from being pride. They were made for each other, and the interests of the one were in most cases the interests of the other. For example, it is not an easy thing to find an ideal friend in a man who has no interest in the particular pastime one affects; and it would not have been easy for Grant and Struthers to have maintained the perfect friendship which they did, across so many years, had they been thus separated. But as it was, they were both cricket enthusiasts. Grant was a very efficient bowler in those days, while Struthers had a very clever turn as a fielder. But they shone not as players but as spectators—as appreciators of the

game and applauders of each stroke. They were often among the crowd at Glenpark—the cricket ground of the town. They subscribed to *The Athletic News*, and the one was always writing a note to the other and dispatching it by special messenger, asking whenever he would be finished with the current copy.

As an illustration of their enthusiasm, let me quote part of a letter from Struthers to Grant, written in August of 1893. Grant was then on Speyside, recovering from the effects of overwork, and there had been on the Saturday a great club match at Glenpark between Greenock and the West of Scotland. Struthers had been there, and on the Monday down he sits to tell Grant all about it. The letter begins quite composedly. He tells how he had twenty minutes' practice at fielding before the match began, but got only one chance, which he buttered—but he has a good excuse, for he has a damaged hand, and so rather shirked the ball. Then he rattles off the figures of the scores ; but presently, as he writes, he grows animated, until you can hear his breath coming and going. The game was certainly exciting. West had gone in and made 150. Greenock followed and made 78 for two wickets, but had to get 72 runs in fifty minutes. Simpson and Ballantine were batting. From that point the letter runs thus :

"J. H. Ballantine hit his second ball into Grieve's garden. Great cheering, but

after it was past I roared out calmly but firmly, 'steady.'

I feared
J. B.,
Ballantine, he: etc.

Before Simpson scored he got a horrible blow. He made such odd gestures that all the ladies laughed. He lay down on his back for fully five minutes, and water had to be got. At last he got up, and I thought he would be fit for nothing—time far on too. But he got a 2, then a 3, more threes—great cheering. 6.30—forty runs to make. Carrick (the famous West bowler) went on himself, but Billy made more—then 20 to make—more threes. Once Ballantine and Simpson were almost at the same wicket, but the ball was sent to the wrong end and B. got back. Then S. drove a ball which the fielder stopped with his foot, but so doing sent it to the wall, and he rushed after it and nearly knocked down three ladies. 150—a tie. Next ball, a short leg bye—GAME WON—eight minutes to spare—three immense cheers. Your servant, who can with difficulty clap his hands, roaring out 'well played' with all his might three several times. The clapping of hands glorious to hear. And Billy was carried shoulder high. Tremendjius enthusiasm—Greenock men almost

weeping for joy. I myself actually went into the pavilion."

Here is something very human and very delightful. It is good to see a man so glad, and that man a minister of the Reformed Presbyterians, of whom Burton said that all Scotsmen were grim, but none so grim as they. But, talking of laughter, it was at Glenpark that Struthers made his most famous pun, the one which established him as a humorist in the thoughts of Greenockians for ever. As there are many versions of it, good and bad, it may be well to give it from the version he tells himself in a letter. Greenock was playing Kilmarnock one Saturday, 7th August 1886—so it is an old, old joke. Kilmarnock won the toss and went in. "The first man just blocked," writes Struthers, "the most wearisome thing I ever saw." However, they made 143. Greenock, batting, crept up to within 12 or 15 runs, and D. Adam—who made 51 not out—was the sole hope of the home team. But the dusk was beginning to fall, and there was doubt if he would make the runs in time. "It is a question," said Struthers, "of Adam or Eve." That was distinctly good, and is told to this day with many variations. In the end, let me add, it was Eve.

As a minister advances in his ministry, however, work accumulates. He finds time grow more precious as it flies. And, by and

by, the Saturday afternoons were too valuable to be spent, regularly at any rate, at Glenpark. So for that and other reasons Grant took to golf. Not that he abandoned his interest in cricket. He never did that, for he made a point of seeing every match he could, and some of his delightful tales were gathered from such visits. For example, he used to tell how at Lord's he heard one spectator say, "That's a yawker." "Wot's a yawker?" said his neighbour. "Why, that's a yawker—that ball 'e played lawst." "That a yawker!—'oo don't know a yawker when 'oo sees it, 'oo don't." Upon which insult No. 1 turned on No. 2 with—"Wot do 'oo know about cricket? *'Ave 'oo ever shook 'ands with Lord 'Awke?*" There was no reply—the question being quite dumbfoundering. Upon which, No. 1 returned to the onslaught. "I say, 'AVE 'OO EVER SHOOK 'ANDS WITH LORD 'AWKE?" "No," admitted No. 2, reluctantly enough; which brought down on him the perfectly crushing retort, "Well, then, don't talk about yawkers to a man who DID shook 'ands with Lord 'Awke."

Or, again, Grant used to quote with approval how he had heard a famous batsman say of heaven, "Well, it's indescribable, but it's like making a good score at cricket," and point out how accurately this described Paradise as a place of achievement, triumph, and ecstasy.

These and many other sheaves of the eye

and ear did he gather on cricket fields; but for health and companionship and that recreation of mind and body necessary for him, he took another way, and the high, wind-swept, beautiful golf course behind his home knew him more and more. He was a pretty and dainty golfer, played left-handed, was not a long driver, but a master of the short game, especially putting. He had an uncanny way of running the ball down from the very edge of the green, which was disconcerting to an opponent. Unless, indeed, one had a stroke or two in hand at the green, the hole was never safe. Looking over his books, I saw one—a Christmas gift from a golfer of known competence — inscribed, *To the Putter, from the Driver*, and another in the same handwriting, *To Four-up from Four-down*; a testimony that the man who could putt beat the man who could drive. Yet, for all his skill, he was a man easily vanquished, if one knew the secret. But this secret was so odd that it marked him out from the run of golfers, and I think revealed his nature finely. The secret was—never to talk. The game with him was subsidiary to the fellowship. He recreated his mind throughout the round, more than he did his body, by the interchange with his opponent of thoughts and fancies and opinions and experiences; and the man who refused this to him, though unconsciously, put him at a disadvantage. He was so brotherly, that the

opponent who treated him only as an opponent, and not as a brother, was sure to beat him. Which things are a parable.

Of course, when Grant took to golf, Struthers took to it also, but in an entirely original way. It was not golf he played, but "henching." Instead of striking the ball with a club, he flung it from his hand. Present-day golfers will hardly credit how formidable an opponent Struthers was to a man playing in the orthodox way. But then those were the days of the solid ball, when driving was short in the average; and Struthers could give the ball a peculiar spin which made it travel: and using, as he frequently did, a leaded ball, his short game was deadly. All this will appear to some golfing readers as savouring of legend, but then in the early 'nineties golf was not yet a religion, and players permitted liberties. Latterly, Struthers laid out a putting green of five holes in his garden, and challenged the world. Many a pleasant and exciting hour he and his friends have spent there, discussing theology, or literature, or politics, or man and woman, and striving to beat the record of the course. Thus on the last summer of Grant's life he writes to him of a famous theologian, "He putted on our green and ate gooseberries just like any ordinary man."

And of the invitations he wrote, calling friends to these delectable experiences, one I possess is on a post-card, and runs thus:

> "This coupon entitles you, on Monday, to six gooseberries and Mrs. Cassels to seven; also to a free round of golf on our links. *Not transferable.*"

The date is 25th July 1914, when, though we did not know it, War, the Demon, was on tip-toe to pound the nations with his reeking pestle and mortar. I think this "coupon" must have been the last invitation to delights of such a sort which Struthers issued, for to him, as to how many, there was no sunshine after that July.

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH.

This Young Woman, who has been playing some airs, she heard at the pantomime, for the last two hours, does not go to church "because she can't stand those tiresome Scotch Psalm tunes." "Yes," he says, "they were evidently composed by people who knew nothing of music." Now it so happens that the last Sabbath she was in church the tunes sung were: Kedron, a Jewish chant many many hundreds of years old; St. Thomas, St. Matthew, Wiltshire, St. Olaf, Evening Hymn, written respectively by Purcell, Croft, Sir George Smart, Dr. Gauntlett, and Tallis, all famous English musicians; and Felix, Saxony, and Walton, written by Mendelssohn, Handel, and Beethoven!

V

BUT what a delight it was to be the companion of these men—to putt with Struthers on his green pocket-handkerchief, or to play with Grant on the hill. When they departed, they diminished our stock of harmless pleasure, and took with them great stores of beautiful thoughts. A part of some of us died with them. And there died with them, too, many loving memories of people of the Victorian age—professors, lawyers, obscure men—who lived in the recollection of the one or the other by reason of some superlative kindness of eccentricity. Of these we can only now recapture a hint or two, as in the case of Mr. Peter Reid, Grant's old master at Dundee.

But the recalling these things leads me to tell of the first occasion when I was made free of the fellowship of one of them, which meant being made free of the fellowship of the other. I had met Grant once or twice since my coming to Greenock, and we had exchanged small services; but one evening we had been at Gourock, each fulfilling an engagement there, and we met by chance when we were homeward bound. At Cardwell Bay he suggested

that we should go home across the hill; so we left the car and climbed the road towards where the guns grin in the fort, till we stood on Craig's Top—the summit of the Lyle Road. There was frost in the air, for it was late autumn, and the great constellations were very near. Never was a starrier night in all the years of my memory. And in the towns beneath us, and along both shores of the great river, myriads of lamps burned; while on the river itself were here and there winking lights, and here and there blacknesses, deep, sinister, and smooth. We climbed the fence beside the road and turned eastward across the grass, a dark and stumbling road unknown to me then. With the wonder of the night, strange thoughts came marching through our minds. At last, and quite suddenly, we came against a stretched wire, probably guarding a golf-green, and paused a little to take our bearings. He stood peering around him—as I could see from the alteration of his outline—and then up at the sky. "What's the latest news about the Milky Way?" he asked.

"Just the same old news," I answered, "that it is still unfinished."

He laughed at that, and at his own thought.

"There is certainly something unfinished about it," he agreed. "It does not seem a very passable highway. The edges are ragged, and it is badly broken in places. But what a huge heap of stardust it is!"

"Suckling calls the Milky Way 'a meeting of gentle lights without a name,'" I said. "And somebody—I don't mind who—calls it 'the foam of the sky.'"

We turned to the left to avoid the wire and walked on. In front of us burned the mighty hunter Orion, lord of all the constellations, and lower down was Sirius, the brightest glory among the single stars. I told him that once, at Carstairs railway station, I had heard one lad say to another, pointing to Sirius, "Jockie, see that big staur ower there; it's as big as a coo." My story was a success, for I heard him chuckle.

"I can see that lad," he said. "I can see the inside of his mind—it's a mixture of 'staurs' and 'coos.' He took a prize at the ploughing match, and he goes to church; will be an elder some day. A lad to get on! for a consideration of other planets and stars generally helps a man to do well on this one. That's not the popular idea. We scoff at star-gazers, but just think of the Nineteenth Psalm. Almost the first half of it is taken up with a consideration of an astronomical object, and in the rest of it the poet shows himself to have a thorough grasp of the principles and claims of life."

"Are you not overweighting with deductions the chance remark of my Carstairs friend?"

"No, because it was a chance remark. Chance remarks mean revelations of character. Down in Dumfriesshire I heard a farmer once commending his wife, 'She's a gude wife to

me, an' has a gran' wye wi' pigs.'" It was my turn to laugh, which I did. "Now," he continued, "in those few words the farmer described and catalogued himself. His crass materialism, his family life, his miserable ideals, and his place in the world were all laid bare in those two sentences."

And now we climbed a little knoll, and the lights of Greenock blazed in front of us, a circle of splendour, and above them a golden haze. We paused again a moment to look at them, for our modern towns are miles of magic at night, with splendours that burn and shift and come and go. Then, descending the other side of the knoll, we dipped into a hollow, and the darkness received us. I think we must have been near an old skating-pond, but cannot now be sure. With the careful, stealthy tread of wayfarers following an unknown road in the dark, we had begun to cross the grass, when three ladies passed us, their figures showing like a faint blur. They were within twelve paces of us, or less, but we were well in the shadow, and they evidently never became aware of our presence, for they continued their chatter. They were young, and their voices clear and cultured; evidently they were gentlewomen. But I heard my companion mutter "How foolish! How unwomanly!" For the three were smoking. The tips of their cigarettes glowed, and the wind blew the fragrant smoke our way. "How unwomanly!"

he repeated with some sternness ;—" If we were doing our duty now, we would reprove them " —and he stopped. But just then one of them began to sing, and immediately the others joined her, their lovely voices chiming together, thrilling and wonderfully sweet. For what they sang was the olden communion hymn of the Scottish Kirk, to the tune *Communion* :

> "'Twas on that night when doomed to know
> The eager rage of ev'ry foe,
> That night on which He was betray'd,
> The Saviour of the world took bread."

Something in the night, something in the flaming stars, something of the utter loneliness of the place must have entered into the soul of that girl and prompted that strange and solemn song. And to us—the listeners hidden in the night—it seemed that suddenly the knoll 'neath which we stood became Mount Calvary, and that up there in the darkness was a waiting Cross. The song ceased after the first verse, as if a rush of thoughts had engulfed it—and so silence. But we stood for long, listening and thinking, the solitude of our souls filled with the whispering of thoughts, radiant and infinite. Somewhere or other, I hope, these girls may be singing yet, for this is not a tale of a very long ago, but never, I am sure, has song of theirs so thrilled their hearers as that brief verse they trilled together once, on their homeward way under

a wonderful sky of stars. And when I parted from Grant at his gate that night, he summed up the incident thus—"These girls with their unwomanly womanliness baffle me. If I propose to judge them by one action, shall I judge them by their singing or their smoking? Still, after to-night I shall never deny that there is such a thing as Christian Bohemianism."

Folk to whom I have told this story have often asked, naturally enough, what his reason was for taking me home from Gourock by such a way, but none of those who knew him intimately have asked it—not Struthers, for example. These latter perceived at once what his object was. It was a night that might easily be made a night of memories. One could never forget the man with whom one walked thus and talked, for the solitude and the darkness and the stars and the chance song drew souls together. He took me across the hill that we might cease to be acquaintances and become friends. For he was a master in the art of being friendly, and scores of young men have had just such experiences as that of mine, when in some strange, skilful way he burst into their hearts. I was interested to read in a London magazine recently a description of just such a walk as I had, which the writer —a London man—had taken with Grant, over the same ground, but on a Christmas morning. And what talks and symposiums, what revelries of the spirit and carousals of the mind, what

holy communions, what quiet examinations of the purpose of God in the world rush into the mind at the name "Grant"! We remember great hours of thought and talk, and always the soul and centre was "Grant."

"I remember," wrote Struthers in *The Morning Watch*, "a November night seven years ago. Mr. Grant and I had been helping Mr. Hunter of Bo'ness at his Communion, and, knowing how we should all be tempted to sit up late, we agreed after worship to go to our beds the moment eleven struck, no matter how interesting the conversation might be. But we got on to speak of our sins and sorrows as ministers, and Mr. Hunter opened all his heart. Eleven struck, and we never heeded it; twelve, and we didn't notice it; one—two—three—four came, and still on we talked. Then five warned, and pulling up the blinds a little after, we saw the colliers passing with their little lamps in their caps; and then at half-past five we saw the baker come along the road and stand still and stretch himself and yawn! And then we took the hint, for breakfast was to be at eight and our train at nine—and we retired, but not till we had thanked God Who had given us such a great and solemn night."

VI

THIS long talk was from a Tuesday evening to a Wednesday morning in the November of 1898. Struthers and Grant stayed at Bo'ness till the Thanksgiving services were over, Struthers preaching on the Monday and Tuesday evenings, Grant having taken the whole of the Sabbath services. To illustrate what has been said on one subject and another, I quote here a letter written by Grant to his wife, about the time of worship that Tuesday evening, just before the long talk began. It is a curious compound letter, the work of the three companions. After telling of some visits he had paid and of hearing Struthers's sermon, "a very uncommon sermon from a very uncommon text, 'And the ends of the staves were seen,'" Grant goes on:

> "We played three rounds to-day and the result was that—In the first round I beat Hunter by no holes but by 4 strokes. In the second I beat him by 1 hole and 7 strokes. In third, equal in holes but Hunter up 3 strokes. This is a true statement.—
>
> (Signed) "A. D. GRANT."

"DEAR MRS. GRANT,—Your husband's story is true *so far as it goes*. In all he took 189 strokes for the three rounds, Mr. Hunter 197. But there was a third man playing who took only 153, and he beat your husband by 17 holes: and your husband says he cheated, which is very painful to me to hear, and it's not true. But we had a good dinner, and there I beat your husband again over all the three courses, the which were kidney soup, roast duck with green peas and the appropriate sauce, and fig pudding. Your husband cannot deny that victory, and your own knowledge will corroborate this my deliberate assertion.—Yours, in kindest remembrances, J. P. STRUTHERS"

"DEAR MRS. GRANT,—You'll not grudge us this very happy time we're having. I was mean enough to make Mr. Grant do double duty on Sunday, to the great joy of my people, but, as he has no doubt told you, he has taken it out of me on the hill. I thought he deserved to have some pleasure after his labours. I believe he has given you the particulars faithfully.—With kindest regards, yours very sincerely,
"W. S. HUNTER."

"At Struthers's desire I cannot close this compound letter without putting in a

love bit. He says I can do no less than tell you I love you as much as ever. Which I hereby do. A."

Hunter died after a brief illness in the June of 1905, and the first rent in this companionship was a startling stroke to the two left, as witness this hurried note from Grant:

"My dear Struthers,—I called three times last night. What can one say about it? But it would be something to be silent in your company. Wasn't he about the very last man in our circle that we associated with death? Peace is with his most knightly soul."

But a few years longer, and the two remaining of that little group, who kept holiday and celebrated a Feast of the Church at Bo'ness, and whom God made exceeding glad there, had passed and left their places for ever empty.

But in that compound letter there are references to matters to which I also must refer. There is, for one, the comical accusation of Grant that Struthers cheated at golf, "which is very painful to me to hear, and it's not true." It is to be remembered that Struthers was "henching," and his score, which he gleefully quotes in his letter, is a testimony to his skill. The course was of not quite the orthodox number of holes, and gave him every opportunity for the peculiar game he played; but there was one very difficult green, which appeared to the nervous putter to hang at

an angle of forty-five degrees. Struthers's ball was lying about seven or eight feet from the hole, but even so it was a very difficult putt. As he took up his position, the others challenged him, directed him to go back an inch and keep his toe to a certain indicated blade of grass. In his queer, delightful way he carefully adjusted his toe to the required spot; then calmly lay down at full length. This brought his head within a few inches of the hole. There it was at his hand, so he coolly and accurately dropped the ball in. This Grant asserted was not allowable, even on the singular rules by which Struthers played, but it has the supreme merit of being funny. So they amused themselves—those boys middle-aged; so they teased each other; but the picture that lingers in our minds is of them kneeling together in the dark of the morning, while the workman outside yawns beneath the lamp, and thanking God for their fellowship and for the joyous time they had spent with each other and with Him.

Then also, in connection with the "compound letter," reference must be made to the lady who received it. Grant was married in February 1888.

> "At 99 Finnart Street, Greenock, on the 7th inst., by the Rev. Dr. Macmillan, assisted by the Rev. J. P. Struthers, the Rev. A. D. Grant, Mount Park Free Church, Greenock, to Susannah Richmond, eldest daughter of the late Captain James Smith."

Struthers, it is seen, was aiding and abetting. He used to say that, when a man went wooing, he required a friend to encourage him, to brush him up, to save him from gaucheries and console him if necessary; and that disappointed wooers, like Duncan Gray and the lad o' the lang glen, would have fared better, even in their first foray, had they had a friend in the background. "If Mistress Jean," he would say, "had looked out at the window and seen the Laird o' Pencock holding the Laird o' Cockpen's horse she wouldn't have said 'Na,' with that dumb-foundering laigh curtsey." And so, very happily and skilfully, he seconded his friend through those golden glorious days.

I find him, to give an instance, writing to Grant, and telling him how at a fishing expedition a certain lady they both knew got her hands badly stung by a big jelly-fish, and, refusing to have them rubbed with whisky when she got home, "preferred to suffer, and suffered all right in consequence." And he adds, "This subject will be resumed, I hope, in due time, and might do for Saturday afternoons now that cricket is over." Those who knew Struthers will appreciate the ironical suggestion that a man's courtship and marriage are subjects for conversation secondary to cricket. For both these men missed no chance of emphasising, in the midst of a community much given to regarding marriage in foolish ways, the holiness and responsibility of this great action. Struthers

—or Grant—would say to a young man emerging from his teens, "Now, if you are like other young men, you will be secretly thinking about marrying some day, and openly laughing at the idea. Begin now to pray that God will guide you in this matter; that He will bring you to know a good and noble girl, and that He will make you worthy of her." Men have told me that this counsel, and the solemn, loving manner of the man who gave it, saved them from hastiness and foolishness in the matter of their marriage; and I have heard Grant say that he never knew a man or woman who thus prayed but who came in the end to supreme happiness in wedlock. And even so it was with him. God gives a man the kind of wife he deserves and the measure of happiness he needs, and Grant was one of God's chosen. How he was loved, how he was helped, how he is mourned all his friends know; but at least there falls across her eternal path and her sister's no shadow of another parting from him.

Perhaps it may be permissible for me to quote part of a letter from Grant to Struthers, to illustrate his home life and the bright, pleasant ways of his circle. It is a letter written from Ballantrae, where they were on holiday one July, and urging Struthers—who otherwise allowed himself no holiday—to come on a visit for a while. Grant writes to his "Respected Companion," as he called him, telling him he is wearying for a sight of him, and describing the attractions of Ballantrae, even to the picture on the wall

of their lodging. There is on the second page of the letter a sly gibe at Struthers's habit of paring down his own expenses in order to have more to give away, which I would like to quote first:

> "It is really very good of me to write you at all, for I have to resort to the little leather inkstand at least every line, and then I have to 'stand' it on its end and create a local 'Corner' in inks, even to manage the line. Your fine robust thought and your dogmatism allow you to amply dilute your own ink, but my latitudinarianism or my shallowness make me feel I must give it at least the vigour and colour of black and white. So I persevere. . . ."

This trick of diluting his ink, which Grant mentions here, was one of those Struthersesque ways, which were always such a wonder and delight. He used to water his ink until it was a lavender blue, saving thereby about threepence a year. This was not a great sum, but it always helped, with other economies, to make respectable the amount he could send anonymously to some effort for the Kingdom of God. But there is something in what Grant hints in his letter, that only a man of robust thought and character can safely dilute his ink. For I remember how, some years ago wishing Struthers to do me a service, I called at his house, and, finding him absent, went in and used his ink to write a note to him. But my

necessity and my peremptoriness seemed to faint away in the thin and faded stream that flowed from the pen. The case as presented was hopeless, the sentences lacked every compelling quality, the ideas became attenuated. Like Grant, I wanted "the vigour and colour of black and white." So I tore the paper into little bits, which I flung in the fire, and came away. Other tales which might be told of that ink-bottle occur to me, but I must rather return to Grant's letter. He writes:

> "To address ourselves to the main theme. I think you will like this place. I have never seen the district or this house look exactly as I saw them the day I was first here. There is one fragment of our 'house-speech' which is often used, though I don't know whether you ever heard us at it. Susan was once disappointed with the appearance of a maid, when she came to her place on the term night. And in her disappointment she uttered the memorable words — memorable, for they have never been forgotten— 'That's not the girl I engaged.' When things are not up to the standard or to expectation we are freed from the mental labour of coining and combining words to express our sense of loss and disenchantment, and fall back upon the crisp dogmatism of one felicitous moment. It was very curious how different everything looked. And as I arrived at the door in the

gloaming, cold a little, late very, I said for self and Susan, 'This is not the girl, etc.' As Wordsworth says, 'A timely utterance gave my heart relief,' and we 'again' were 'strong.' Still the place has daily gained in my regard, and I am sure you will like it much. . . . There is another thing which is distinctly salient. The commissariat here, you will be pained to know, is a very hard thing to maintain in variety. I tell you this not to depress you, but to let you decide these points for us. We agreed to a fine of one penny on any person who said, especially at table, where anything came from. Now I am held to have incurred the penalty twice myself, and I protest. After a long sequence of meals, in which everything else was subsidiary and potatoes were the salient feature, I said, 'If this goes on much longer we'll be talking with a brogue.' This is held to be a penal utterance, as indicating that the potatoes came from Ireland. I am willing to submit to censure for speech somewhat lacking in my usual refinement, but I maintain it is not an offence under the statute cited. So I appeal. The second case is still more arbitrary. I said at breakfast the other morning, 'The wind is from the east, I think.' 'One penny' was snapped at me from the other side of the table before my well-meant originality was completed. Now it can be fairly questioned if even

air can be called a food—(though an old weaver in Girvan, whose trade was so far gone in these days, did say to me when I said, 'Grand fresh air here!' 'Ay, fine air. That's aboot a' poor fouk in Girvan hae to live on'). That is some evidence, but my remark had no reference to air. I spoke of the wind. There can be no wind without air, there can be air without wind. And, if literature speaks with one mighty unhesitating voice on any subject, its testimony is that while creatures, as lovers for example, can tread on air, or even for a time live on air, no case has ever been satisfactorily attested of any person for any requisite period living on the wind. And so again I appeal."

Here we have a very charming domestic interior, and here we have Grant, with his humour, his whimsicality, and his irony. It was this irony, this gentle sarcasm, most often at his own expense, which made him a difficult man to know, and which gave people sometimes a false impression of him to start with. One of his Greenock colleagues tells that, when he first came to the town, and knowing no minister in it, he met a tall, absent-looking man, who said to him gravely, "My name is Grant; you are probably well acquainted with my books." The impression he at once formed was of an author vain of his works, and it was not until he discovered that Grant had written no book

whatever that he remembered the slight smile with which the words were said. But to this day he is thankful that he did not display vanity and weakness in his answer. As Struthers said—"He might have replied, 'Oh yes, I have them all, and have derived great help from them; and I think the last one you published was decidedly your masterpiece.'" Yet, of this singularly whimsical man, Grant, so difficult to comprehend, it may be said, what he himself said of some one else, that "if he did not care for recognition, he did like that folk should understand him." The people he liked were the people with whom he could be ironical without fear, or whimsical without exciting criticism. I always have had the impression that he counted me among the men of his circle from the hour when, as I have already related, I "rose" to his question about the Milky Way. And, looking through his letters, I see here and there in them sparkles of pleasure that, in spite of all his whimsicality and reserve, people had found him congenial—as thus, when describing a cruise on the *Midnight Sun*, he writes:

> "We have had two smoking concerts. At the first the captain presided. At the second I did. I was not displeased to be asked, for it showed that 'under a somewhat grave exterior he concealed, etc. etc.'"

Yes, he did like that folk should understand him, and no man loved more to be loved, nor loved more.

VII

IT is to the everlasting honour of his congregation of Mount Park that there of all places he was understood and loved. There, in his own pulpit and surrounded by people he knew, many of whom owed to him their understanding of what religion is—their appreciation of earth's greatest treasure—*there* Grant was a great preacher. He used to say that in any other pulpit he lost fifty per cent. of his effectiveness. Perhaps; but there in Mount Park he was one of the three best preachers in Scotland. The author of a delightful book called *Pictures of Travel*, an artist, gives there his impression of Grant in the pulpit of Mount Park, as seen by him again after an interval of years:

> "In the preacher there was little change. The same keen, wise, patient face, the same penetrating glance, the same clouds of mystic solemnity trailing about him as of yore. I felt again that awestruck reverence for a father in God, for one whose words were ever a stimulating and sanctifying influence. Again I hear those quiet and solemn phrases in his reading; again

> I listen to a sermon full to the brim with cultured and choice allusions, yet charged with a divine enthusiasm, a message freighted deeply with thoughts, yet with quaint penetrative humour and pathos at times. Happy they who can often listen to such messages and be cheered with the converse of such a minister!"

This is a true picture of Grant as he was—of God a messenger. And there, in his own pulpit, was given to him some of his greatest happiness. He loved to preach, because he had a zeal for souls. His way and mine from the study to the pulpit never crossed but once, but the interview that resulted I have not forgotten. I had a visit to pay that Sunday morning to a soul departing, and in coming down the steep street I met him at his church door. "How often are you preaching to-day?" he asked. "Thrice," I told him. "I also thrice," he said. "'*Now stand we on the top of happy hours.*'" The quotation is from Shakespeare's Sonnets—the XVIth, and is surely significant of his feeling.

I know a minister who cannot bear to have the door of the pulpit where he preaches closed. It cuts off his retreat, he thinks; so if the beadle closes it, he stealthily opens it at the first chance. Grant had a different thought. He liked to be shut in, and was pleased to hear the click of the catch. He said that it gave him confidence.

"You get it very cheap," said Dr. Denney, hearing him. But that again was only a whimsicality of Grant's. For, consider this extract from his first sermon in that pulpit of Mount Park, if you would see whence he had his confidence and his appeal. The text was John xx. 21, "As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you," and this was the closing paragraph of the sermon:

> "If the ministry this day begun can help you, my brethren, to believe greater things of God than you have already done; if it can let you open wide your hearts and all your intellects to believe that when God speaks of Fatherhood, He means it; that God will be your sun and shield, lightening your life, shielding you from every final harm; if, like Macbeth, this ministry can murder sleep in some who have been steady church-goers all their days in a dull routine of empty life; if it can make any sad soul glad; if it can strengthen any tempted, brace with God's strength the embarrassed and the poverty-stricken and worn; if it can break pride and worldliness; if this man and that man be born here, it will be because Christ of His mercy has said to His servant, 'As My Father hath sent Me, even so am I sending you.'"

Here, surely, was a preacher aware of his warrant, and confident because he felt himself

sent of God. But it is to be regretted that in the years when Grant was at his best—that is, in the years from forty-five—he spoke without manuscript, or from a few pencilled notes unintelligible to any but himself. There can therefore be no volume of representative sermons. But to give some idea of the man as an exponent of the Word, I quote an extract from a letter he wrote to a divinity student in his congregation, who had asked him for counsel in the difficult art of preaching; and I quote the letter also for the spiritual quietness which is in it:

"GLENSIDE, 16*th June* 1902.

"How have you been getting on with your preparation for your pulpit each week? Not unfrequently a minister asks me what texts I have recently been having, but very often my texts don't seem to strike the other man. No wonder. For God gives us certain lights on certain passages at particular stages of our spiritual history, and what suits one at that stage does not appeal to a man at any other stage so strongly — perhaps never will appeal to any but to a mind of a certain type. So very likely if I tell you some of my recent texts you may not see much in them just now. If so, don't blame yourself. Don't even blame me. One I liked was—'And such were some of you' (1 Cor. vi. 11). Look at the context and you will see my

reason for saying, 'Christianity is always the religion of miracle.' Some of them had been *that*, they were now *this*. The great ages believe great things possible. In the worthiest homes great things of God are believed and great things of men. In the noblest souls faith in the moral miracle continues, while 'the world will not believe that a man repents.' I also preached the other day on 'The God of Jacob'—the God of the unexpected, the unlikely, of the unlovable man. Certain sinners are not repellent, but the mean, sneaking, crafty sinners are. We don't believe in the redeemableness of certain kinds of sinners. God does. The Gospel is for 'all sins.' He is not ashamed to be known even as 'the God of Jacob.' In Ephesians iv. 10, the Ascended Christ is the same that Descended. Christ, so compassionate, so encouraging, so accessible to all here, is the same ascended. Hence, trust for those dear to us gone to Him, and for us in going. Power, dignity, love have not altered Him."

These are the merest outlines. They are the tracing out of the flower-bed—the marking of its limits and shape; the flowers are all to come. For, when these sermons were preached, they would be very lovely and fragrant things, jewelled with gleaming thoughts and many

a reference to golden words, spoken in past days by the gifted and the good.

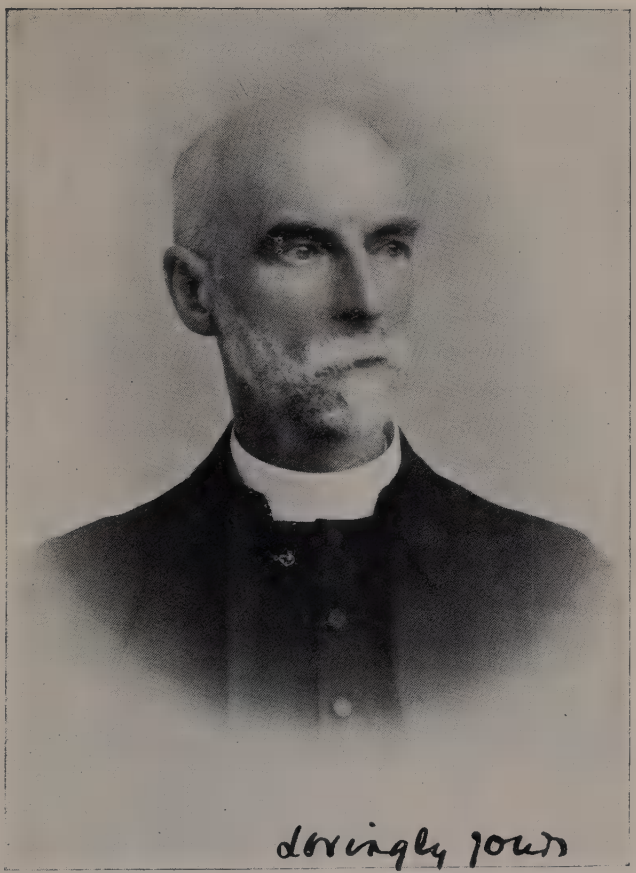
In order, however, that the reader should have a clearer idea of the process of Grant's message, let me recount one of my talks with him. It was a morning in a day of his last autumn, and, going to see him, I found him sitting in his garden, on a big seat made for him by a carpenter in the North, and all about him were the chrysanthemums. He had been correcting the proofs of Dr. Macaulay's *Private Prayers* — work for which the author made acknowledgment in the preface — and that set us talking on Prayer. "I am thinking of preaching on Prayer on Sunday," he said, "but so far have only one or two detached thoughts."

"What are they?" I asked.

"Well, there is the thought that Prayer is flight from Fear—from the Fear of the universe. We are afraid of the universe, so full of death and stars and dreadful things."

"Do you think the stars dreadful things, Grant?"

"Yes, monsters of dread. That is why God puts them so many millions of miles away. I think that for every sensitive mind the world is a place of terror. I met an old woman on the road outside Grantown, and I said to her, 'It's a fine day.' 'Ay,' she said, 'but we'll have rain afore nicht, if *they* can manage it at a'.' You see she regarded the un-



"The same keen, wise, patient face: the same penetrating glance: the same clouds of mystic solemnity trailing about him."

seen powers as hostile. *They* were planning how to vex her, and *they* would do it, if *they* could manage it. From such fears Prayer is a flight. Then again, Prayer is an appeal from Fate. Sometimes, as in reading a Greek tragedy, the idea of Fate gets possession of the mind; the thought of Fate, which is a kind of Demiurge, made by God and yet independent of Him. Prayer is an appeal to the Absolute; an appeal from the Demiurge—from Fate, from Secondary Causes, and from whatever Secondary Intellects there may be—to God, the Absolute, the Unconditioned. I have the conviction of making that appeal when I pray for those who are very ill. Secondary Causes — Fate if you like — have condemned this man to death. He is dying, but I kneel beside the bed, and I make my appeal to the Absolute. In very many cases the appeal is heard; and I am convinced that, unless the appeal were made, it would not be heard. If you do not pray for the dying, they will die. The case will be lost by default; as if, when it is called in court, the appellant is not present nor represented."

If the reader will consider those thoughts and what they involve he will, I am sure, regret that there is no record of the finished discourse, nor indeed of any of his later and more characteristic work. I fain would have heard that sermon on Prayer, of which I saw the rearing of the scaffolding.

The most casual may see from this instance

that there was something very subtle in Grant's thinking. He was not always easy to follow; there were tangents and retreats in the line of his thought. His mind was like a wheel, which revolves but does not progress. It moved, but not towards any goal. Such a man is apt to be underestimated, because imperfectly understood. Struthers, on the contrary, was simple. One saw the radius of his thought at once, but often with surprise that such perfectly simple and beautiful thinking had not come within the grasp of one's mind before. But by his very simplicity he puzzled people. The thing he said or did was frequently so surprising that they asked themselves, "What does he mean?' For instance, a lady, whom I know, tells of the first time she met him. It was at a tea-table and he sat next to her. His grace was very brief—"Lord, bless our food and fellowship. Amen." Then he turned to her and said, "We'll not take butter, you and I; we'll take marmalade; it's cheaper." "What a queer man!" she thought, having a sense of social dignity and a liking for butter. "Whatever does he mean?" But he meant just what he said, and nothing more nor less.

Again, he was standing on the quayhead one day, when a small steamer came in. There arose a dispute between the men on the boat and the men on the quay, as to who should catch the steamer's rope. They all became rapidly angry, and words of disreputable lineage

began to arrive. But Struthers stepped forward. "I'll catch the rope," he said. So, leaning his umbrella against a post, and taking off his hat—a wise precaution—he caught the rope, while the men stared at him, thinking him the queerest minister they had ever seen. But the action was not queer, it was only a little unexpected, only simply kind, only like Struthers. Sometimes, his actions or his thoughts did tremble on the tip of absurdity, but he was never absurd. He had too keen a sense of humour for that. Now here, for example, are some verses of a little poem, published years ago and now quite out of print, in which an absurd subject—for a poem—is treated with delightful simplicity and humour. And the result is not absurd; it is delightful and droll.

THE HEDGEHOG

"Out of weakness were made strong."

"O lonely, clumsy Hedgehog!
Thou helpless little thing!
Thou hast no might like other folks
Of claw or hoof or wing.

Thou seemest so forsaken,
As if 'mongst aliens hurled.
A little Athanasius!
Alone against the world.

Yet, great and mighty Hedgehog!
What king is mailed like thee?
Ten thousand fixed bayonets
Defend thee constantly.

Forgive our unkind Shakespeare
  Who called thy voice 'a whine,'
For every *point* thou makest tells.—
  Would I had voice like thine!

O little brave Elijah!
  Calm faith to teach so apt;
Before God's face thou stand'st, thy head
  In thy rough mantle wrapt.
. . . . . .
And when God calls thee, Hedgehog,
  In the spring-time of the year,
Thou risest in thine armour,
  A soldier without fear."

A little knowledge of natural history, a dash of laughter, and a great deal of childlikeness will bring the reader an appreciation of these delightful verses. But in case such an appreciation does not arrive, let me try again to entice it by quoting another of his little poems, this on "The Crocus":

"The Snowdrop is the little maid,
  Her wrapper white and green,
First of the household out of bed
  When wind and frost cut keen.

The Crocus is the fire that's lit
  Or e'er the others rise,
To make the hearth and altar fit
  For food and sacrifice."

If the reader does not admire that, I shall not try again.

VIII

TO many people it always appeared a strange thing that a man of such exquisite humour and such rare fantasy should be found in the Reformed Presbyterian Church, one of the smallest and straitest of Scottish denominations; but that was not Grant's opinion. Struthers, he declared, would have been a glory to any Church,—and no one will be found to say "nay" to that,—but he would go on to express doubt if any other Church could have produced him. For Struthers joined the communion of the Reformed Presbyterians in his earlier teens, and their worship and their theology and their judgment of life made him, under God, the man he was. For one thing, the Reformed Presbyterians—the Cameronians as they are often called, after Richard Cameron, who fell at Ayrsmoss—are to this day the most Scottish among the Scottish kirks. The mantle of Elijah—of Cameron and Peden, of Walker and M'Kail—has fallen upon them. They have inherited a double portion of the spirit that burned in the breasts of the martyrs. And Struthers was like his Church; he was the most Scottish of all the Scotsmen I have known.

Not that he had no interests outside his native land, for, as the Cameronians are strong in Ireland and America, so his sympathies and his prayers flew wide across all oceans and all shores; but he was ever a child of the land of bens and firths. So it always seemed to Grant that the most Scottish of Churches was the right place for this distinguished and most Scottish of Scotsmen.

I am tempted, in order to prove what I have been saying or quoting about Struthers's nationality, to give an extract from one of his speeches, and I succumb to the temptation. It is part of his "remarks," when one year he seconded a motion at the annual meeting of the Greenock Provident Bank. These are the closing sentences:

> "There is just one other thing I would like to say. We have all read lists of the hundred greatest books. I am not going to venture on a list this afternoon, but I think there has been a strange omission in some of them. I take it for granted that every boy and girl in Greenock has a Bible, and that every gentleman present has one. Putting that on one side, there are two or three books that every boy should have — the *Pilgrim's Progress*, *Robinson Crusoe*, the *Scots Worthies*, the *Shorter Catechism* (with the *multiplication table* on the back, *grace before meat*, and

perhaps a *pledge-card*), and the fifth book should be a *Bank-book*. I think that, if the *Shorter Catechism* and the *Provident Bank-book* were bound together, it would tend considerably to the security and safety of both. I am not saying which is the predominant factor, but I think the boy with these five books has laid the foundation of a very good life."

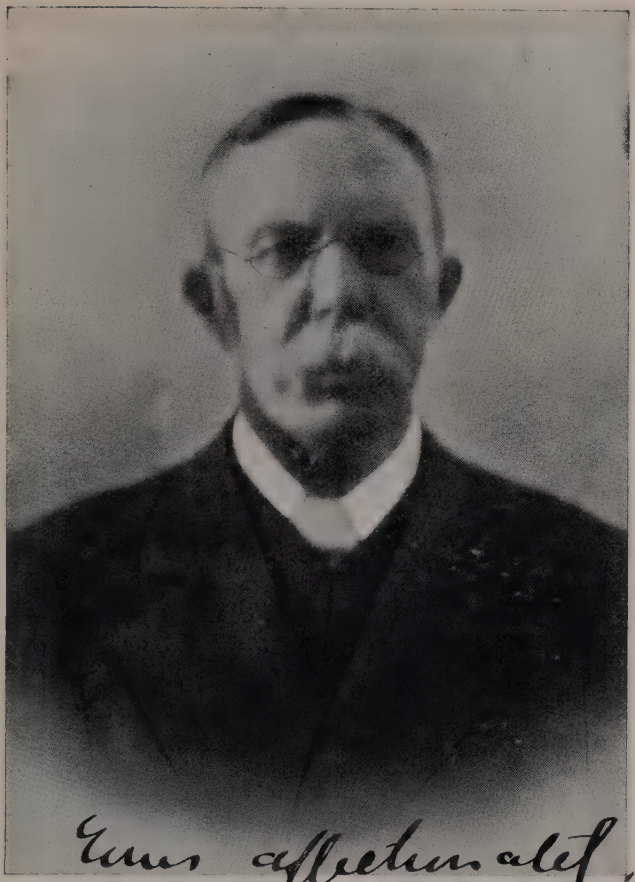
Could any one but a Scotsman have said these things? Is this not a most happy expression of those qualities which have raised our nation, from being one of the poorest among the European circle, to being what she is?

The thesis, however, as Grant developed it, does not terminate here. For not only is the Reformed Presbyterian the most Scottish of our Churches, but it is also characterised by a steady refusal to yield in any way to the prevailing latitudinarianism. The faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, the customs in worship observed by those who have "gone up," may be found in their purest form in the Church to which he belonged. Consequently, among them one finds many old fashions—a manifest delight in a psalm, rather than in a hymn, which is indicative of their robuster taste; the absence of a choir; a preference for the posture of standing at prayer, which, though the least comfortable, is the more logical attitude

of those who call God their Father. Among them one finds no compromise with the world —in the matter of Sunday labour, say, or in those other matters in which churches are prone to consider the expedient. Surely it is a fine thing to know, that, in this somewhat Laodicean age, there should still be people who prefer the ways of the fathers, and preserve them from perishing out of the land.

I ought to add here too a word regarding the deep things of the soul. All Churches are God's Churches, but the Church of which Struthers was so great an ornament has never ceased to regard God as a Covenant God, and themselves as a Covenant people. They have thus, these Cameronians, drawn very near to Him; and, knowing them and knowing Struthers, it was always Grant's opinion that among them he was in his right and only place.

And who could doubt it, seeing him in the pulpit? His attitude to the Metrical Psalms, to take one instance, was not that which other Churches countenance in their ministers. He had no conscientious objection to singing hymns, but regarded them as redundant, holding that everything which the Christian desires in song may be found in the Psalter. "We must sing the New Testament," an elder declared to him, before a service he was taking in a strange church. "Very well, we'll do that," he said; "let us begin with the twenty-third Psalm and then go on to the seventy-second." "Shall we not



"We must sing the New Testament," an elder declared to him, before a service he was taking in a strange Church.

"Very well, we'll do that," he said, "let us begin with the twenty-third Psalm and then go on to the seventy-second."

take a hymn to-night?" asked the choirmaster in another church. "Certainly," said Struthers, "if we can't get a Psalm to suit." But suitable Psalms, it appeared, were plentiful, when he looked for them; and the baffled musician had to confess that he never knew such Psalms existed before as were given out that evening. And it certainly must be acknowledged that in the Psalter are thoughts and words that fit most excellently well to circumstances, as this war has shown. Struthers could give many examples of that. Once, when the feu of his new church was being arranged, it was seen that it was most awkwardly shaped, but that, across the wall, there was a little unprocurable bit of ground which would make the plot of Church land just right. Unexpectedly, and at the last moment, it was gifted to the congregation, to their satisfaction. Now it chanced that, at Public Worship, they were singing right through the Psalter, and next Sabbath one of the verses Struthers gave out was:

> "By thee through troops of men I break,
> And them discomfit all;
> And by my God assisting me,
> I overleap a wall."

It is not great poetry, or poetry at all for that matter, but it was a fine expression of what that congregation felt. So the old Scots Psalms and the tunes they were sung to—some of them almost as sacred in the minds of the

people as the Psalms themselves—had their ever-consistent admirer and apologist in Struthers. And a very effective apologist he was, as witness this *Reason for not going to Church*, one of a famous series in *The Morning Watch*, here with the legend reproduced.

IX

THE Reformed Presbyterians had cause to be proud of him—as they were. They reckoned him, I believe, their foremost preacher; but he had a greater supremacy than that, for in expounding the Word, and in declaring the love of God for men, there was none like to him in all broad Scotland, nor is there any like to him left. These, I think, were the two outstanding peaks in the mountain range of his preaching, which for thirty odd years stormed the skies in Greenock. I question if in many generations there has been so unique an interpreter of the Bible. He brought to it a careful, exact scholarship, but other men have done that; he brought also a living zeal for the Gospel and the Kingdom, but so have other men; but he brought also an imagination, which circled in a wide orbit round the poles of humour and austerity, and this was his unique gift. Consequently, the Bible became in his hands a living thing, like Moses' rod. It became a serpent to sting the conscience and arouse the soul. He would take a text and turn it and combine it with others, and one would see in it deeps and gleams and beauties, that few other

preachers could reveal. We have to go back to Thomas Fuller for a like holy wit and sanctified imagination. His sermons were, consequently, full of arresting things and of beautifully conceived touches. Speaking of Enoch he said, "God took him to be with Himself, because heaven itself was not quite heaven till a living human being was there. It was not quite heaven till Christ should see before His face that human nature which He was to save by His death on the Cross." I have never met with that thought before, and to me it is very striking.

Speaking of the Holy of Holies, the inner chamber of the Temple where God was, he said: "It was not separated from men by doors and bars and keys. There was only a curtain, and it of marvellous beauty, with pictures upon it, that man might look and admire, and not fear and dread." That sentence is only a little chip from the vast edifice of his interpretation of Bible symbolism.

Again, in a sermon upon the Legion of Devils in chapter v. of Mark, he suggested, that, in destroying the herd of swine, Jesus was perhaps doing a mercy to some prodigal son, in taking away his occupation and making him "come to himself." Regarding the request of the devils that they might be permitted to enter the animals, he said: "You like to hear a man declare that he would like to do something noble —to touch the cup of fame, if but for one single draught. But to hear beings, once angels that

sang in the presence of God, to hear them wish to enter into swine, to know a swine's heart, to know a swine's enjoyment—that's a very awful thing. I cannot help but feel, in this entering into the swine, that they wished it because they saw in it a new way of vexing God. They had entered into man, but they had had no dominion over the creatures, and now they saw a chance." See how deep his furrow was! He ploughed with five yoke of oxen.

In this great matter of expounding the Word he drew most happily upon his vast reading and on the events of his eventful life, for he, like Grant, was always encountering strange things in not out-of-the-way places. For example, in this same sermon on the devils he pictures the demoniac returning in his right mind to his own house, and seeing the marks of the mischief he had done there in his devilish rage—broken furniture, smashed doors, defaced ornaments—and this he illustrates, first, by a reference to Tennyson's Cobbler :

"An' when I waäked i' the murnin', and seed that our Sally went laämed
'Cos o' the kick I'd gied 'er, an' I wur dreädful ashaämed ;"

and, again, by telling that he was once in a house, and a little child, hardly old enough to know the family shame, seeing him look at a piece of broken furniture, said, "Papa did that last night."

Thus did he expound and illustrate the Word, always simply, always greatly, always with the

elements of imagination and surprise. When Grant was asked to indicate what he deemed most characteristic of Struthers, among the things written or told, he pointed to one of the Bible-class exercises in *The Morning Watch*, "Texts suggested by a Photographic Album." And since it illustrates also the unique manner of Struthers in handling Scripture, and his affectionate knowledge thereof, I quote four consecutive sections, there being fifteen in all:

PORTRAITS OF STATESMEN, POLITICIANS, ETC.	Ye fools, when will ye be wise? . . . Smoking firebrands. . . . Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker! A potsherd among the potsherds of the earth!	Ps. 94. 8. Is. 7. 4. Is. 45. 9 (R.V.).
FINE FACES.	Thou hast dove's eyes. . . . A wise man's mouth. . . . Thy teeth are like a flock of sheep, which come up from the washing. . . . Having His Father's name written in their foreheads. . . . His face as it had been the face of an angel.	S. of Sol. 1. 15. S. of Sol. 4. 2. Eccl. 10. 12. Rev. 14. 1. Ex. 28. 36. Acts 6. 15.
PHOTOS OF POOR FRIENDS TAKEN OUT TO MAKE ROOM FOR OTHERS.	Ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing. . . . Sit thou here in a good place. . . . Despise not thy mother when she is old. . . . Thine own friend, and thy father's friend, forsake not.	Jas. 2. 3. Prov. 23. 22. Prov. 27. 10.
ONE'S OWN PORTRAIT.	In Thy book all my members were written. . . . Thou hast destroyed thyself. . . . When Israel was a child, then I loved him. . . . Childhood and youth are vanity. . . . O that I were as in months past! . . . Yea, grey hairs are here and there. . . . Now, also, when I am old, O God, forsake me not. . . . Shortly I must put off this my tabernacle.	Ps. 139. 16. Hosea 13. 9. Hosea 11. 1. Eccl. 11. 10. Ps. 25. 7. Job 29. 2. Hosea 7. 9. Ps. 71. 18. 2 Peter 1. 14.

But of Struthers's preaching the doctrinal basis was the thought of the Love of God. To him the world was full of kindnesses, great and small, which God was busy doing. The tender mercy of the Lord was over all His works. Perhaps there is no more valuable asset in any town than a man who believes invincibly in the love of God. We all believe, but how many believe *invincibly*? How many times do we hesitate in the face of some most cruel sorrow, and wonder how God's love could ever say "Amen" to that! We faint by the way. We may even admit hell and God's mercy there, but we hesitate, sometimes, in face of the little pitiable things, which so rend the heart and break open the fountains of our tears.

Just such a story is that which Lord Lytton tells of the old Frenchman, who made his living in Versailles by exhibiting some white mice, most intelligent little creatures, whom he had trained to climb poles, leap through paper hoops, and perform other antics. Late one night, when he was crossing the Boulevard des Italiens with his little performers, who had gone to bed snug in their box under his arm, he was nearly run over by a steam-roller, and, in the effort to save himself, dropped his box, which was crushed beneath the iron monster. Three hours later, one who had witnessed the tragedy passed the spot again and found the poor old man still there, leaning against a lamp-post

and weeping bitterly for his white mice. Here is a story typical of the miseries that are daily recurring round us, and there is in it a certain needlessness, a wanton heartlessness, which sets one wondering and perhaps doubting. Now in *The Morning Watch* Struthers tells the story, and there is a little pathetic picture of the Frenchman, here reproduced; and when he has told the story he makes this comment:

> "One wonders why God did this thing, and yet one may be sure that, if we knew everything, we should see that God did it all in love, love to the old man and love to the little mice too. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And not one of them shall fall on the ground without our Father. Not one of them is ever forgotten before Him. He permitted them, as the Psalmist tells us, to find a house where they might lay their young, 'even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.' But mice have come closer to Him still. For do we not read in the Book of Samuel how the mice of gold were put in a little coffer, and the coffer was laid beside the very Ark of the Covenant, close by the Mercy-seat and the Cherubim?"

Here, I take it, is a comment which only a man with an invincible faith in the love of God could write; and to the afflicted, the wounded in life's affray, such a man was the very Presence

THE OLD FRENCHMAN.

of God, and his words as a banner and a sword.

This invincible faith in God's love was part of his heritage from his mother. I have told of her last prayer: here is another story of her dying time. She told her son that she had remembered with great pity the souls that are outcast for ever. "But the All-Merciful may save them yet," she said. "It repented Him once, it may repent Him again." The text she alluded to (Genesis vi. 6) has been a stumbling-stone to many, but what a strong faith it was which struck from it a spark of eternal hope!

Grant had much the more philosophic mind. He met such an incident as that of the old Frenchman, not by a simple childlike statement of his continued and triumphant belief in God's love, but by seeking some explanation along lines I have already indicated—the existence of a Fate in the world, created, but not inevitably controlled, by God. He used to point out that there was a heartlessness in things. One could see it in Nature, he said. And he would quote:

> "Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
> How *can* ye bloom sae fresh and fair?"

as an illustration of the careless indifference of the most beautiful things to sorrow and heart-breaking. When he was challenged to square such ideas with the cardinal thought of the

love of God, he pointed out that our games consist in overcoming difficulties which we ourselves have made. In golf we could walk up to the hole and drop the ball in with our hand —as Struthers did on the occasion at Bo'ness — but, instead, we multiply difficulties,— bunkers and rules,—and the game consists in getting the ball into the hole in spite of these. Even so, he would say, God has made rules for Himself with regard to us. He has created Fate; He has made rules, which we call natural laws, and which by their action break an old Frenchman's heart or somebody else's, every day, every hour. And we have to play the game also—with these rules. We have to accept the killing of the white mice, and loved ones ten times dearer; and the game is to keep loving God, and knowing that He loves us, in spite of all.

In *The Morning Watch*, in a little story called "Phemie Todd's Sucker," the reader will find Struthers working out these ideas of Grant's, and may be interested to see the point at which he ceases to follow his friend. In this connection I must quote one of Grant's *obiter dicta*:—"I observe," he said, "that if you take two pieces of wood — say two sticks — and throw them together on the ground, they will form some sort of a cross. And the Divine Nature and the Human Nature flung together on this earth in the person of Christ were bound to form a Cross.

It is inconceivable that He should be anything else than the Man of Sorrows." "Yes," said Struthers, when I told him what Grant had said, "that is just what the Bible says, 'It behoved Christ to suffer.'"

X

TWENTY years ago, the University of Glasgow did itself honour by offering to confer upon John P. Struthers the degree of D.D. There was ample reason. He had been a very distinguished student; he was one of Scotland's most famous ministers; he was in effect and reality a great Doctor of the Church. So, on a Saturday morning in the March of 1895, his name appeared in the list of those who, in the following month of April, the University would cap Doctors of Divinity. A host of congratulations poured in on him, for all men felt how worthily the distinction had been won, and how worthily it would be worn. The only one of such with which I have here to do is that from Grant. To him, as to everybody else, the announcement in the morning paper was the first breath of it, so he put down the paper and straightway wrote his friend this letter:

"GLENSIDE, GREENOCK, *23rd March.*

"MY DEAR STRUTHERS,—I wish I had seen you yesterday, that I might have contradicted you, hectored you, mocked you, while it was possible in ignorance. If I had, to-day I would have been feeling like

the woman 'of ancient story' who said, 'Na, na, honest woman,' to a stranger, and found she had been speaking to the Queen.

"So I have lost my friend. What may be still I don't know, but there's something gone. When one has to say 'Yes, sir!' every sentence; when one can no longer say 'Perfect rubbish!' by way of contradiction, but can only suggest 'True, sir, but might not one at the same time contend,' etc., it is all over.

"One would like to dally with surmises, imaginations, on the new state of things. Either you will come here and be confounded with Wallace 'the doctor,' or you won't come any longer, except after six or seven patronising assurances to my wife on the street that you have been reproaching yourself for not having seen me these last eighteen months, 'but really one has so many'—And where be your gibes now? Your gambols? Your songs? Your flashes of merriment? Oh dear—doctor!

"*Et tu*—who used to think it was such an awful thing to be a doctor in such a science. And you haven't got a system. And you don't know what your philosophic standpoint is. Have you a thesis to give in? And if so, what are *you* going to give in a thesis on?

"You are not yet seised (that is right)

and infeft in your honours, so one can sadly and fearfully trifle with you, uncertain whether even now it may not be resented, and knowing it will be after April.

"I was never more surprised. I was startled and delighted. If,—since it is only March yet, one may say so—it seems awfully funny. The whole look of things is changed. I can think of nothing without reminding myself there has been an earthquake since last night, and though I seem to see Purvis's steeple [in Gourock] on the top of Dumbarton Rock, it's all right, for that's where Purvis's steeple is now.

"But I am very greatly pleased, only I can't get a hold of it.

"Wishing you all good. My wife is now living to see you capped.—I am, ever yours, A. D. GRANT."

It is addressed to "The Rev. Dr. Struthers, Greenock."

But a few hours brought Struthers's reply.

"*Saturday.*

"MY DEAR GRANT,—Don't mock.
I've respectfully declined it.
Yours as heretofore,
J. P. STRUTHERS, M.A."

Some men like to win honours and wear them; to others it is sufficient only to win them. Of these latter was Struthers. No man loved better to prove his strength—to be

prizeman in his class, to be excellent in all the things he undertook, to be one of life's gold medallists. That was his religion, for whatsoever his hand found to do he did it with his might. But to wear an honour, to display a medal, to be capped D.D. and called "Doctor,"—he could not face these things. So he "respectfully declined." "I have an old lady in my congregation," said Grant, "whose son sent her home a magnificent shawl from China. She keeps it shut in her drawer, and has never worn it once. She says, 'It's ower grand for me, but it's real nice to feel I can be grand if I like!' Struthers knows he could have been Dr. Struthers had he liked, and that is enough, and quite enough, to his mind."

I took up an issue of *The Morning Watch* once, and, reading the announcement on the first page, "Edited by Rev. J. P. Struthers, M.A.," remarked, "It certainly would have overweighted the little sheet had it been 'Edited by the Rev. J. P. Struthers, D.D.'" "Yes," said Struthers, hearing me, "*The Morning Watch* is above that," and then added, hastily, in the way he would do, his face quivering, his head slightly nodding, his lips trembling, "Not that my name, or anything I could do, is above the D.D., for no man is above the highest honour that a group of his God-fearing fellowmen can pay him, but 'J. P. Struthers, D.D.,' looked to me like a man with a nose far too big for his face."

"You think the D.D. would have made you a bogie man to the little readers of the *Watch*?"

"That would have been a Dreadful Disaster," he rejoined. "But, soberly, a man has no business to change the letters of his name, even those at the end, without grave and sufficient reason. It's like a man"—thus gliding off the subject—"changing the way he wears his hair, shaving his moustache or his beard. The way a man wears his hair is part of his character, and every change is generally for the worse. I knew a man once who was a great speaker at temperance meetings, and one morning he had a tiff with his wife, and went and shaved off his beard to spite her. So there was revealed a jaw that nobody had suspected—like a parish butcher's. And there was a temperance meeting that night, and, when the man appeared, nobody knew what to think. But the chairman in his opening speech said that under usual circumstances there would have been no need to introduce their friend, but that to-night—— Then everybody laughed."

So on he talked—humorous, witty, reminiscent, always delightful. Alas! that such talk we shall hear no more!

A letter written to his friend by Grant on his last annual holiday may well come in here, by reason of a reference to the doctorate at the close, and also because there is in it mention of the *Watch*. Here it is:

"WHERE ENVYING IS, THERE IS CONFUSION."—*James iii. 16.*

The girl in the air has no Mother, and she sees the Policeman coming—he has chased her away three times already to-day—and she envies the other little girl, her nice dress and her pretty doll. And the other girl, who is going to the Dentist's to get two teeth pulled out, would far rather be having a swing!

"NEWTONMORE, 19*th August* 1913.

"MY DEAR STRUTHERS,—On Saturday I was cycling on the road to Laggan. We came up to some lambs who ran always ahead of us, and the dog being 'gun-shy,' instead of turning, chased them. So we sat down to give the lambs a good start of us. In a quarter of an hour the shepherd came back, having penned them somewhere, and I explained that we had waited to let them get well ahead of us. 'Well, well! the like of that, now. I never, never saw such considerateness.'

"When I found I was in such high grace I wanted to tell him I was a minister, but I didn't. But that considerateness is 'me all over.' You answer letters. If I had written you, I would have added to your labours, most probably when the *Watch* must be finished by Thursday, and this is Tuesday, and you couldn't get on; hadn't even found your 'reason for not going to church.' So I forbore, entirely in your interest. 'The like of that, now!'

"I met a Norwich minister, a man as well set up as K. of K., who said things you would like to hear about the *Watch*; and also that his copy has gone monthly for fifteen years to a missionary friend in Madagascar.

"Professor Cooper met me on the road last week and spoke, and, when I told him

my name, he was immediately impressed by my most striking resemblance to the Lairds of Grant, the Earls of Seafield. It is not usual to lavish such quantities, save on princes. I thought of the contrasting candour that has found more ancient and less flattering resemblances in me, and I really preferred the latter.

"When I came up here, somehow it was inferred that I was 'Dr. Grant' of some sort. All sorts of natives called me so. Latterly, I began to feel that it was rather nice. And I thought that if these honours were sent down on approbation for a fortnight, to be returned if you were not satisfied, they would be even more rarely rejected than they have been.

"I really mean to spare you the trouble of writing me, however much I should like to know how it goes with you."

Two references in that letter I must explain. The one is to "more ancient and less flattering resemblances." Struthers always insisted, and not without reason, that Grant resembled the Pharaoh of the Exodus — Mineptah — whose mummy is in the museum of Cairo. The suggestion was certainly not flattering, but the outline of the features, the poise of the head, the high sloping brow, the dignity of the pose all warranted it. "Don't you think so?" Struthers asked me once. "Well," I answered,

in a happy moment, "at least they were both kings, for Grant reigns in the souls of his people and in the hearts of his friends." "Yes," said Struthers gravely, "but there is a difference. *His* heart was never hardened."

The other reference is to Struthers always answering letters. Grant said of him that he was weighted with principles, that he made a religious duty of every detail of life. Accordingly, he answered letters, not as many men do from a habit of method or a liking for business ways—for Struthers had no claim to be called methodical or a man of business,—but entirely as a matter of conscience. So to answer a friend's letter he did not wait for the mood; he drove himself through it then and there. In which connection there may be cited a story of his, which I give as Grant had written it.

> "Struthers was telling me of a conference at Oxford at which a Canon declared that, since his 'second conversion' he had not to his knowledge committed any single sin. Another speaker rose and said, 'Does my dear brother always answer his letters?' I don't know whether the question was prompted by an unfavourable experience of the saint's promptitude or by a sense of the incredibleness of the affirmative answer. I prefer the second interpretation—that this is another last infirmity of nobler character."

XI

IN that letter of Grant's, quoted above, written from Newtonmore, there comes into view *The Morning Watch*, greatest of little papers, most delightful of monthlies, which for seven and twenty years ran its gay, wise course. It was a magazine for the simple and childlike mind; little folks liked it; grown-ups wearied for it. And the first claim I would make for it is that it was easily among the foremost *Christian* periodicals in the world. For one thing, it admitted no advertisements, save a modest little advertisement of its own yearly volumes: advertisements being often very questionable things, and some quite worthy enough publications serve God with a sermon on one page, and Mammon with an advertisement on another. Then, again, there was no smear of controversies across its white pages: no letters nor leaders ever appeared dealing with the crisis in Church or State. That might be mentioned, but only to draw again the wise old lesson of love and charity. These are negative virtues. For the rest it was, like its editor, a unique expositor of the Word, a little world of humour and entertainment, a gentle and safe

counsellor. There are few parents but would desire that their children's minds might be shaped after the pattern shown in the *Watch.*

Every man's life is a plan of God's, and when we turn over the pages of the *Watch* and think what it meant to thousands all those years, we see the purpose of God in bringing Struthers to Greenock. For in few other places could the conditions have been so fulfilled which permitted the *Watch.* That town, situated at the mouth of the great river which is one of the chief highways of the earth, with ships in its harbours and seamen in its streets, with tales from the ends of the earth told in its kitchens and drawing-rooms, but with the Scots blood strong in its people—that town supplied to his mind a stream of ideas and pictures which few others could have done. And, in addition, a firm of clever publishers was resident there, to whom the *Watch* was not an item of business but a labour of love. Still another necessity which Greenock supplied was a library of the exact nature required. Any one, turning over the pages of the *Watch,* can see how immense was the pile of books, upon the top of which, like a butterfly thing, it lay. One has only to take up a recent number and look at the page of Texts, or the series "Concerning Birthdays," to see that. And in the Library, associated with the name of James Watt, greatest of engineers—the second oldest public library in Scotland—there were just the books he needed.

Its age made it rich in biography and history; readers are permitted to roam its shelves at will; it was just the library for him. He told me himself that the *Watch* would not have been possible otherwise, and that to verify a date or a fact he had quite frequently to hunt there for hours, handling scores of volumes.

And yet there was something else, for Greenock supplied him with coadjutors, without whose encouragement and without the pressure of whose minds upon his, the little paper could never have been what it was. There was Dr. Denney, a Greenock man, not *Dr.* Denney yet in his *Watch* days, but laying then the foundation of his present fame; and there was Grant. It was not in Greenock, however, let me here turn aside to say, that Struthers found his most indispensable helper, but in Glasgow; for there lived the lady whose beautiful chalk drawings, instinct with imagination and knowledge, were the glory of the *Watch* from its first number to its last. What he was with his pen, she was with her pencil; and if one desires to see portrayed the humour of the streets or of the homes, the delightfulness and waywardness of children, the laughter and the pity of things, one may find all one seeks in the pictures of the *Watch*. The comradeship in work of these two gifted and saintly people—like a charming tune wedded to exquisite words—became in God's time a closer comradeship still. They were wedded seven years, and

then the Angel of the Presence bade him pass on before. For seven and twenty years they had borne *The Morning Watch*, like an Ark of the Covenant, but suddenly his feet touched the brim of Jordan. The burden was laid down; he passed into the World of Light, and to her there was left a great Thanksgiving. She could stand where he had left her, and look across the dark flood to where the light broke upon the farther shore and say, "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you."

In the early years of the *Watch*, before there had come to its editor a full realisation of his strength, Grant contributed largely to its pages. A copy of the first volume—a prize now for book collectors—was sent to Grant by Struthers with the inscription, "To A. D. G. with the other Author's compliments." Especially were the notes upon the Bible lessons Grant's work, and very well done they were. Here is a letter from Struthers to him referring to these. For the fun that is in it I give it in full:

"Eldon St., Greenock, *Thursday.*

"1. My dear Grant,—

"2. I congratulate you on, alone of all men, having had a dry August. You were to write if it was wet, and you didn't.

"3. I was at old Mr. Joseph M'Culloch's funeral to-day. He had one or two bad turns lately, but I never should have expected death so soon.

[It was of this old man, let me interpolate, that Struthers told that, being in the way of complaining one day, an ancient lady reproved him, "What ails you?" said she. "Haven't you got a good comfortable grave to go to—bocht and paid for?"]

"4. I got your International Sabbath-school lessons on Tuesday and was thankful I hadn't gone for a holiday.

"5. You would notice there was no period after 'thankful.'

"6. Yet I was at Loch Ard a fortnight ago to-day seeing Robert Allan. Visited the Trossachs, Loch Katrine, Ellen's Isle, etc.

"7. Your dicky is well but still pale. Has silenced the other bird we are keeping. ('Preserver of birds' our sign at present.) They exchange cages now and again. Your one is persistent in seeking to make friends. The other is moulting, and is annoyed at the everlasting gymnastics of your one.

"8. Rufus non est inventus.

[That is, Rufus has not been shut up. Rufus was the cat.]

"9. There is great advantage in this paragraph system. It looks like Fleming's *Manual of Philosophy.*

"10. That gave me material for another paragraph. 10 items in one letter.

"11. Did you take a note of next

month's lessons? I added a little to your first and improved your 2nd.

"12. Don't speak about Greenock cricket. Oh no, we never mention it. Its name is never heard.

"13. Remember me kindly to your wife and Miss Smith.

"14. Enjoy Craigenputtock.

"15. No more.

"16. But remains,

"17. Dear Grant,

"18. (Must make out the 20)

"19. Yours gratefully,

"20. (Half sarcastic that)

"21. J. P. STRUTHERS."

So, with a gasp of relief on his part, surely, that he had made out the twenty, with one to spare, he thrusts the letter in the envelope and encloses a note of the lessons for next month.

After a time, when Struthers had developed, Grant's direct contributions ceased largely, and the editor generally wrote every word each month. I find in one of Grant's letters to his friend this paragraph, which marks how the pilot of the early volumes had been dropped. "I saw Prof. Cairns. The *Watch* is to him a regular fountain of inspiration. I had thought very highly of him, even before he said that. He had heard I had something to do with the supply of the fountain, but I told him you had no tributaries but the clouds."

But one of these clouds, and by far the biggest and richest of them, was Grant himself. When he ceased to be a direct contributor, save on the rarest occasions, he became a source of criticism and suggestion of the first value. The way he lived, the thoughts that teemed in his mind, the stories he told, the books he read, all can be traced in the pages of the *Watch*. "How much he helped me with this little magazine," wrote Struthers in his memorial notice of his friend, "I cannot put in words." Grant, alone perhaps of all men, had the secret of Struthers's mind and knew the kind of thing he wanted; thus he was able to relieve a little the labour and the strain. Labour and strain! some one exclaims. It was only a small twelve-paged mite, published once in four weeks, with no more reading in it than is in a couple of columns of an ordinary newspaper. And an editor of a big daily might well smile aloud at the idea, as he directs his sub-editor to fill two columns with the report sent in of an exciting trial, and another column by a review of a recent novel, with copious extracts. But the labour and strain of the *Watch* can only be known by those who know what labour choice things cost. One can find clover in abundance in July weather—by armfuls, if one likes,—but, to bring home a few sprays of four-leaved clover from the fields, one must spend hours in search.

So he needed help, and there was Grant to

help him. Thus I find Grant writing to him, reporting the result of a whole day's hunting for some Great Sayings of Great People upon Courage, Anger, etc. It is a very dissatisfied letter, for the search had not been fruitful; but the writer has the satisfaction of knowing that he has kept his word, for he had promised to write Struthers on the "Wensday," and it is done with ten minutes from midnight to spare. Close work!

> "Upon my word (my broken word, is it?) I can't get anything better about anger than I can see inside this stone. Destructive lava can be made an ornament to be worn on the breast."
>
> [Struthers told me that Grant's favourite text was, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee."]
>
> "Or is this anything? 'The fire of his anger was lit at the sun.' Also my own block or chuckie.
>
> "Thomas Fuller says, 'Anger is one of the sinews of the soul.'"

And so he writes suggestion after suggestion, but none of them to his mind excellent, and at the end he confesses—"I have enjoyed this like teasing a pound of oakum."

I do not know in response to what despairing request for help Grant gave the hours of that November day. The letter, if a letter there was, is not extant. But here is one very

poignant pencilled appeal from the harassed editor to his friend :

> "Surely in the whole range of English poetry there must be a beautiful description of a boy or girl (preferred) between ten and twenty for the 'Ages' in the little *Watch*—Shorly—shorly."

That would send Grant searching, but again, as a reference to the *Watch* shows, without success. It is never easy to bring water to a neighbour's mill.

XII

BUT it was not only what Grant did for the *Watch* which was a help to its editor, but, as I have said, the way he lived. For example, read what Struthers wrote in the Christian Endeavour paper about his friend :

> "The man that is faithful in much is always faithful in little. Let me give one small instance, taken from literally the last few minutes of his life. As he and ex-Bailie Forbes and myself walked along the street together the day he died, all of us kept busy knocking orange peel off the pavement. Mr. Grant asked me if I had noticed how bad the streets were with it the previous Sunday morning, and then added that he had stopped over fifty times on his way to church to clear the pavement.
>
> "I have been told that a lady, who was asked one day by some one if she had seen Mr. Grant passing that way, said, 'You have only to look at these skins on the pavement to know he hasn't.' Yes, he was a great remover of stumbling-blocks."

Now turn to *The Morning Watch* for February

1909, and there is the picture "A Good Man's Footsteps."

"Have you seen old Mr. Orchardson pass this way, my dear?" asks the old lady.

"No, Ma'am, but I'm sure he hasn't, for I saw a lot of orange skins on the pavement, and HE ALWAYS KNOCKS THEM OFF," replies the child.

And in the number of May 1906 there is one of those delightful little stories, about a member of our Stock Exchange, "who has a weakness," as we term it, "for knocking stones and orange peel and banana skins off the pavement." Such instances of how the *Watch* was indebted for material to Grant are very numerous; and any reader of it, who knew the two men, may identify a turn of thought or the setting of a phrase as having had its origin in the minister of Mount Park.

Grant had among his qualities more than a touch of style—that incommunicable and ever-delightful thing. He was one of those who could make the word fit the occasion in a subtle, smiling way. Struthers's favourite example of that is in the pages of the *Watch*, where, describing the sundial in the quadrangle at All Souls College, Oxford, he speaks of the motto graven under it, *Pereunt et Imputantur*—that is, the hours pass and are counted against us. Then he goes on:

> "A few weeks ago, as I stood gazing at that dial, one of the Fellows of All Souls

told me that many a man had tried his hand at translating the words, and that he had heard one translation that was very good, but unfortunately it had escaped his memory. Whereupon I told him of the rendering a friend of mine, a Greenock U.F. minister who is a skilled artificer in words, had made some years ago, which had always seemed to me to be singularly felicitous, better even than the original, though perhaps the phraseology was too much of a Scotticism to be appreciated by an Englishman. *Pereunt et Imputantur*, 'Bye, but not by-with.' Judge of my delight when this Englishman said, 'That is good, I must make a note of it'—which he accordingly proceeded to do; then reading it over, he added, 'That is a better translation than the one I have forgotten.'"

We can imagine that scene—the Fellow of All Souls, notebook in hand, with a far-away look in his blue eyes—his eyes, I think, must have been blue—smacking his lips over the Northern rendering; and Struthers, his face shining with delight, his sensitive lips quivering, repeating in his deep voice, that voice which once heard could never be forgotten, the striking translation "Bye, but not by-with"; and over them is the great sundial that Wren erected, across whose face two centuries and more have passed. He wrote to Grant, of course, and told

him the story, and Grant's comment was—"I am glad they think so well at All Souls of my English Versions. It was not in Versions that I thought I should make my mark. That just shows. Which is what *The Morning Watch* exists to prove."

And here to my mind is, characteristically from Grant, a description and criticism of the little paper. It existed to *show*—that things are not as they seem, that human plans are subject to God's revision, that God's plans are very wonderful. It was a still, small voice, in a generation given to worshipping Secondary Causes, witnessing to the Eternal Fact and the Eternal Love of God. In that letter, from which the above short paragraph is an extract, Grant tells that, wearied with much writing, and it being the First of June gone half an hour, he took up the *Watch* for a rest. It was the midsummer number of 1907, and there is a story told there of two little Highlanders, who played at making waterfalls and lakes in the glen where they were born; and, years after, one of them made the suggestion for irrigation works in India, which saved a province from famine. Then the story finishes with this Struthersian thought, "And that is why the rain was sent to that Highland glen thirty years ago." We acknowledge this when it is pointed out to us, and *The Morning Watch* existed to *show* it.

The paragraph which, in Grant's letter, follows the one quoted, refers to the very

A GOOD MAN'S FOOTSTEPS.

excellent cooking Struthers had experienced at the hands of his landlady in Oxford. "It is a little disappointing to know that you are aware not only of the *what* but of the *how* of what you have been eating in Oxford. I have told my wife, but I think she is vexed that you have been sufficiently at leisure from yourself to find out that your landlord also has got a treasure." The point of which wit may be perceived, when the reader remembers that Mr. and Mrs. Struthers were at Oxford then on their wedding trip. Ah! *Pereunt et Imputantur.* We smile at the humour and teasing of these men, for we loved them, but the shadow on the dial has engulfed them; the hours passed, and there came one for each of them to escort them to Sleep. But a saying of the poet Gray leaps into my mind, and I apply it to them: "I love people that leave some traces of their journey behind them, and have strength enough to advise you to do so while you can."

I have written with regard to the help Grant gave to Struthers in the writing of the *Watch* that perhaps he alone of all men had the secret of Struthers's mind, and knew the kind of thing he wanted. This leads me to note here that the limits of the *Watch* were clearly defined by its editor, and beyond these he would not step. These limits I may not quite know, but I made, at least, one discovery regarding them. I brought him an excellent story, as

I thought it and as it was, which in my reading I had come across. He acknowledged its quality, but pointed out that it was an anecdote of a man who was a Roman Catholic, and that he made it a rule not to publish such. He showed me a mass of admirable material illustrative of the various series of the *Watch*, which he had rejected on that score, though with keen regret. "When it's coming on for the 20th of the month and I am just at my wits' end, I think of those things. But, no, they'll never be in the *Watch*."

Was there ever an editor like this, who would refuse admirable "copy" for a reason which some people would call obscurantist? For my part I would have honoured him had he printed them, and spoken of the "wide catholicity of his mind," but I honour him ten times more that he didn't print them, for in these Laodicean days, this is the rarer temper; and this is the rarest of spirits, the man who decently, unostentatiously lives and works according to a principle, even a minor principle, which he believes to be advantageous to himself and his circle.

XIII

ONE limitation—if indeed we may call it so —in *The Morning Watch* is very noticeable, this, that no use is made of what is often the mainstay of children's magazines. There are no fairies nor giants nor witches nor magic, spiritualised or otherwise. This is absent because in Struthers's opinion it savoured of superstition, against which in all its forms he waged unremitting war. The popular notions of lucky or unlucky days, numbers or suchlike, the survivals of folklore among us, seemed to him to be wickedness and sin—a disrespect to the Creator, a doubt of the Providence and Love of God. He was of opinion that as the twentieth century grew less religious it grew more superstitious, and he never missed a chance of protest. In one of his stories in the *Watch* he describes two people—the Gilmours, an old man and his daughter—flitting. Now in a letter to a friend, who was in the throes of that event, Grant remarks, "Of a flitting one can merely wish that an entirely Christian temper may be maintained throughout the entire proceeding." And a "Christian temper" to Struthers meant, for one thing, the entire

suppression of all those frets and fancies which still cling to that and other domestic crises. So of the flitting of the Gilmours he writes:

> "The people in that district held firmly that it was unlucky to go into a clean house, and that made the old man and his daughter all the more determined. 'Let us never lose a chance of knocking a superstition on the head,' he had said to his wife, when they agreed to marry in May. 'To put off to June would be the same as saying that June belongs to God and May does not.' And on that principle he had gone ever since."

And on that principle Struthers also went, practising what he preached, for he so arranged it that he was married himself in May. In a letter to Grant he tells how one of his friends proposed to consult a clairvoyant, "but I raged and forbade and prevented her." And how he could rage on that topic I once saw when, in my hearing, a lady told how she had attended a spiritualist meeting, and had handed up her brooch to the medium, who, when he took it in his hand, at once said, "Oh, I want to weep! I want to weep!" Struthers broke out with, "It's you that should want to weep—you should go home and pray to God to forgive you the sin against Him—playing with His holy things and meddling with His Divine

purposes." The lady seemed astounded, which showed that she had no intimate acquaintance with Struthers, and tried to justify herself. But he swept on, "Anybody could see it was a mourning brooch with hair in it. Any stupid person could tell it was a sad thing." So he carried off the victory, for the lady, cold to his reference to sin and God, seemed struck by the commonsense remark on the kind of ornament it was.

But in *The Morning Watch* the absence of the fairies was amply compensated for by the presence of birds and beasts and creeping and growing things, which are made to talk. This is according to the Scriptures, where the ass speaks, and even trees, like the cedar and the bramble. Very funny some of those talks in the *Watch* are. One of the earliest of them is in the account of the Golden Eagle which lives in the North of Scotland, and which one day went to visit her sister in Wales, arriving very breathless after her flight, but with friendly exclamations:

> "'Oh, how nice your house is! Mine is so small—only five feet square. But I think heather makes a far better lining than reeds or rushes. And what lovely little children! My ones have not nearly so much white in their tails, but they are big heavy boys.' And the other says, 'Our papa went over to Ireland this morning, and

I am anxious about him. He is far from strong. I made him weigh himself on the bough of a tree the other night, and he was only 12 lb., and last year he was 12½.'"

These, then, were two of the limits within which Struthers worked in producing the *Watch*, but there are some others, not so obvious, and some of which I do not know, but Grant understood all these things. He knew what bounded the mind of his friend on north, south, east, and west, and because of the perfect understanding between them Struthers trusted him implicitly. Of the *Watch*, accordingly, Grant was master-critic.

Those delightful poems which appeared there —as good some of them as anything Father Tabb ever wrote—were most frequently scissored by Grant, who said of them: "Struthers supplied the ideas and the poetry which is in all ideas; I mended the rhyme." Thus I find in their correspondence Struthers submitting to Grant no fewer than four different versions of a poem on "The Daffodil," and Grant making his choice among them, suggesting an emendation, and then pronouncing it "a rarely bonnie bit," which it is, as any one may judge, for this is it:

"When Mother sets the table-cloth
With all her pretty ware,
The children know she plights her troth—
There's dinner in the air!

So all our fears our Father stills
In Springtime's chilly morn,
The God who sends us Daffodils
Will not forget the Corn."

It will at once be seen that a man who held principles like Struthers, and in a gentle, refined way made no secret of them, would meet with many adventures. His surprisingness, of which I have already written, set people talking about him in his lifetime and keeps them thinking of him now that he is gone. One never knew what he would say, or at what original angle he would regard a subject or an object. Added to this, he was something of a tease. Consequently, the stories told of him are legion. Best of all, to my mind, are those in which some Scripture text is reverently and cunningly applied. That kind of story has an aroma all its own.

I once asked Grant what he thought was the best application of a Bible text to an occasion, and he told me about a man whom I knew and loved, but who has been with God these ten years and more—Alexander Davidson of Kilbirnie. For pawkiness and fun and shrewdness there was none like him among the men I knew in my early manhood. Grant said that he once met Davidson and asked him what he had been preaching on last Sunday. "I was on Psalm cxii. and 5—'A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth,'" was the answer.

"But suppose, Mr. Davidson, some one had taken you at your word and asked for the loan of

a hundred pounds, what would you have said?" "No difficulty there whatever," said the old Scotsman; "I would just have finished the verse:

> 'A good man doth his favour shew,
> And doth to others lend:
> *He with discretion his affairs*
> *Will guide unto the end.*'"

At that time there was much talk in the Churches about the Rev. John M'Neill taking his humour into the pulpit with him, and Grant asked Mr. Davidson if he ever were tempted to do that also. "Yes, often," he replied, "but I don't do it, for I say to my fun as Abraham said to his young men, 'Abide ye here with the ass; and I will go yonder and worship and come again to you.'" Grant thought these examples the best he had ever encountered; still, any one who knew "Davidson of Kilbirnie" may easily match them.

And these shrewd answers of Mr. Davidson's recall to me another of Grant's questions. I once heard him ask Mr. Archibald Denny, then nearing the Dark Portal, what passage in the Bible he loved best. The old man thought a little and then said that, while he had pleasure in the Psalms, as all Christians have, he had a special satisfaction in considering the story of David and Jonathan. "And this," Grant said afterwards, "was as if he had declared that human friendship had been to him the very

dearest of earthly treasures," as, remembering that he also had his David, it was to Grant.

The Struthers stories, to which I refer, are not all of apt quotations on his part, but frequently of apt quotations made to him. For example, it was according to the strict way in which he lived, that he considered jewellery as barely lawful. He did not allow, or at least he grudgingly allowed, that it might be used as ornament; and being in a jeweller's shop one day, he glanced at the contents of the glass cases on the counter, and half-smilingly muttered, "Vanity of vanities." The sagacious old man behind the counter smiled back and answered him, "At home and at worship we are going through Genesis. And this morning it happens that, in due course, we have come to where Abraham sent Eliezer his servant to get a wife for his son Isaac, and I read that there were both earrings and bracelets in Eliezer's bag—jewels of gold and jewels of silver."

"Ah!" said Mr. Struthers, "you would notice that bit."

It was a coincidence which would please him that, at worship that morning, the jeweller and his family had read that passage. To his devout mind it would appear providential, and who will say that it was not? By such things humble men learn.

And for another Bible text well applied take the reply of the same man to Struthers, who,

one day, found him dressing his show-cases, arranging the pretty things there to advantage, and made some remark upon the very secular employment. Upon which the other answered him with a text from the Book of Proverbs, "Be thou diligent to know the state of thy flocks and look well to thy herds."

"You have the better of me," said Struthers.

I tell these stories partly because they illustrate a type which is passing from amongst us —a type to which these men both belonged. There are plenty of people left who can quote the Bible, but the texts they quote are evangelical, mystical, or emotional. Who now quotes the Book of Proverbs or the example of Abraham to vindicate his business? We use more commonplace arguments, and with the passing of Struthers there has departed from among us a stimulus to that way of thinking, and to that love of the Word which made men, like the wise old jeweller, carry it in the heart and couched ready on the lips.

And to conclude this matter, one tale I must tell of Struthers. He was visiting "grand friends" once, who took him out driving. On the way they passed some worthy people he knew, walking quietly along in the dust of the highway. Struthers stopped the carriage and got out. Going up to them he said, with a blush and a smile, "I have seen servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." Then, without another word, he

returned to the carriage. The text is from Ecclesiastes x. 7, and his wit and his real humility and his way of handling Scripture and his originality are there in that quotation, like saltness in a pinch of salt.

XIV

AND what pastors were these men, Grant and Struthers! What tender shepherds of the flock of Christ! We shall never see their like again, for they were both men of supreme gifts and of supreme faith. They were not always happy perhaps—no child of man is always that—but they were always serene. If they had not Ecstasy for their friend and companion, they had Tranquillity, the good angel God sends to His chosen. Consequently, on these tranquil hearts many burdens were laid, for we do not bring our broken hearts to the tearful or the austere; we bring them to the serene. They, we know, are comforted of God; their untroubled eyes see the King in His Beauty and the Land of Vistas, and by their vision and their faith they comfort us. And here, I think, is the explanation of the extraordinary love these men received from their friends. They lived unarmoured. The roads to their hearts were many and unguarded, and they had a word and a tear for all torn things.

One afternoon in late April I was with Grant at Langbank. The Spring had come early there, as it always does in that nook beside the

river, and the leaves were green upon the lime-trees. Unthinkingly, I reached up my arm, as we passed under one, and broke off a twig. He looked at me reproachfully. "How can you justify that to your conscience?" he asked. And when we returned that way he looked up at the tree, "It's still bleeding," he said, with a little shiver. Thus in the wide and crowded avenues of his mind all hurt things and all hurt folk were given right of way, and perhaps that explains why death called him so soon and in a manner so imperious. "What plant do your visitors like best to see?" I asked the gardener in the conservatories at Coudham in Ayrshire. "The sensitive plant," he answered. "They all want to see it and touch it, but in the end they kill it." That is the price which sensitiveness —a living sympathy and a quick response—pays for being sensitive. We all desire to resort thither, to touch the healing leaves, but in the end we kill it.

I remember once, when Grant and I were talking of a minister's pastoral work, that he asked me what was the most poignant visit I had ever paid. He was fond of asking such questions. So was Struthers, for unconsciously they had been infected by each other's mannerisms. "What was the most poignant visit I ever paid?" I repeated, as my thoughts travelled back over the griefs and tragedies of nigh a score of years;—"I don't know; but I remember some most terrible. I went to call

once at a little thatched cottage where a very decent couple lived. They had one child—an imbecile. A boy of fourteen years it was then, but with the intelligence of a baby of fourteen months. Only the legs had grown, but there was no power to move them; so the creature lay in a kind of wooden box thing at a small window, gooing up at the light. I'll never forget the first look I had at him; it made me shiver to the very marrow of my bones. I had peeped into the crib expecting to see a chubby baby, and instead there was this monstrous thing. My next visit happened at a time of great excitement. The mother thought that the child was watching a geranium which stood in the little window, and was trying to touch it. That was the first time that the thing had noticed anything, except to turn its head and goo at the light. I thought the woman would go mad with excitement. She hugged the imbecile and kissed him and said how proud she was of his cleverness. God help us all, Grant! I know I needed helping then, for I was very young, just in my twenties, and it harrowed my very soul to go there. The face was as white as a ghost's, and, though the legs were hidden by the sheet, I knew how they curled up, for I saw them once. And the way the mother went on, caressing the imbecile clay, was horrible—horrible."

"There was something fine in it too though, Cassels."

"Yes, I used to think what a story it would make in the hands of a French realist like Boutet. He would have entitled it 'The Geranium.' But I used to feel dreadfully helpless."

"How often we do that! Still there is the Appeal of which we were talking in my garden the other day. There is Prayer; and it wonderfully comforts most people to hear God being told about it all."

"Yes, that is a good way to put it."

"I remember," he went on, "going to visit a friend in a mining village Wishaw way. For some reason, which I have forgotten, it was very late at night when I arrived, and I did not know where the manse was. However, they directed me at the station, and I set out. But I got hopelessly involved in little by-streets, where the people about, both men and women, all seemed in the last stage of tipsiness. As I was going along in a kind of aimless way, I saw among the lighted windows one with a woman's shadow on the blind. She was obviously employed washing dishes, and presumably sober. So I thought I would see if I could get from her a rational direction. Well, I knocked, and she immediately came to the door, which opened straight into the kitchen, so that the light from within fell full on me as I stood on the threshold. The woman looked at me, and at once began to scream, babbling something I could not make out. In less time than it takes to tell it there was a little crowd round us. One

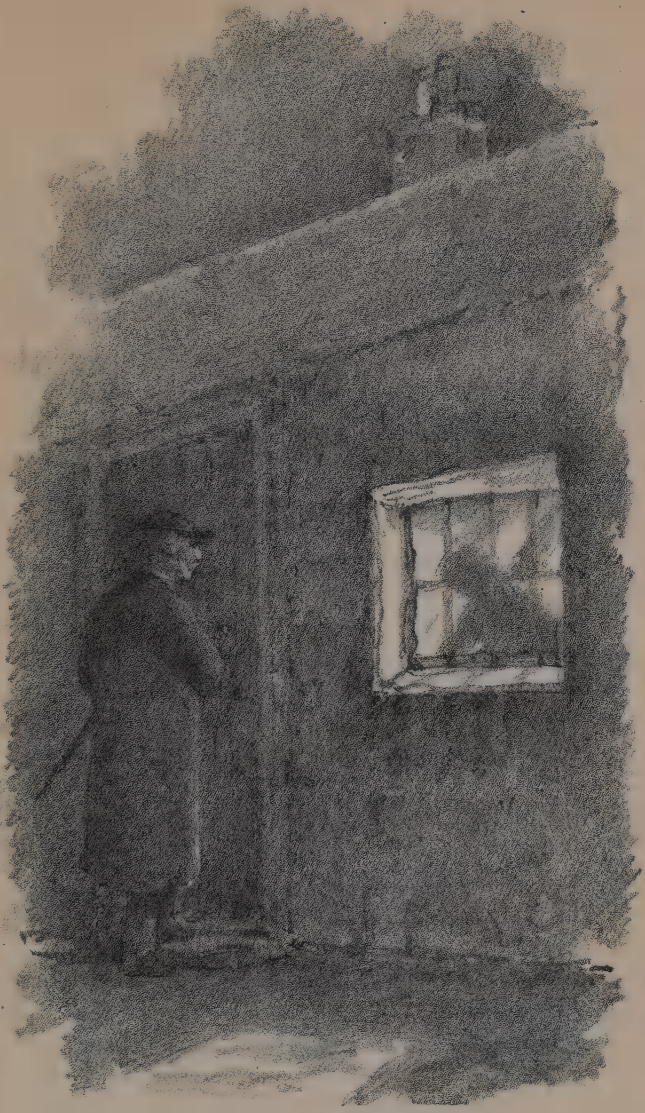
big, stout, and quite sober woman demanded an explanation from me, so I told her what I had wanted and what reception I had got. She looked me over in a shrewd way, and then she stepped up to the weeping and screaming woman, 'It's a' richt, Jen',' she said, 'he only wants tae ken the road.' The other hushed on the moment—'O Betty! I thocht something had come ower ma Jake.'

"The explanation was that her husband was out working in the pit on the night-shift, and the appearance of a minister at her door at once suggested to her mind that there was very bad news. She did not know me, of course, but she knew my collar and hat. It appears it was the custom there that if a man was hurt in the pit one of his mates told his wife, but if a man was killed it was a minister who went to the woman with the news. So you see how her alarm and grief arose."

"That was a poignant visit indeed, Grant; yet it was a visit you didn't intend to pay and which you really didn't pay."

He nodded his head gravely in the way he had, and went on:

"What worlds of anxiety were in that woman's scream! What watchings and listenings for a footfall on the doorstep in the dead of night, or for a cry in the street announcing the bringer of evil tidings! So I have, since that night, prayed much for the women whose shadows are on the blind."



THE SHADOW ON THE BLIND.

I remember that I told Struthers about this adventure, and the comment he made was that it was what Grant got for being late, for he presumed that Grant had reached the town, or village, by a later train than the one he intended, and so there was no one to meet him at the station. For, like many busy men, Grant had to save the fragments of his time, and he did not believe in waiting ten minutes at a station for a train, or being a quarter of an hour too early for a meeting. There was always some use to which he could put the odd minutes,—there was a letter to write, or a reference to turn up, or some ideas to excogitate, —and as a consequence he sometimes missed his train, or just got to the meeting with nothing to spare.

Struthers, who had a keen eye for idiosyncrasies, used to poke fun at him for this cheese-paring of time, just as Grant used to poke fun at Struthers for his cheese-paring in other ways. For instance, calling one day at Glenside, Grant's home, at an hour when his friend, as he knew, had some engagement to fulfil, he asked, "Is Mr. Grant away yet?" "No," was the reply, "it isn't time yet." "And if it were," rejoined Struthers, "he wouldn't be going for a little." Which story may be capped by another, of Struthers meeting an old lady friend of Grant's, when the latter was away on a journey, who was greatly troubled by an announcement in her newspaper that a man in a blue serge

suit had been killed on the railway. This description, so far as it went, exactly fitted Mr. Grant, and hence her fears. "But," said Struthers, "the report said that the gentleman had evidently been late and was hurrying to catch a train, and you know that Mr. Grant is never late." "That," she said, taking him seriously, "is the very thing that is worrying me."

Struthers was thinking of Grant when he wrote, "There are times when it is an honour to be late and a dishonour to be punctual. The Good Samaritan, one may be sure, was a good hour behind his time when he completed the journey that made him immortal." And many a time, for exactly the same reason as the Good Samaritan, Grant, and Struthers too, were late.

And the fact behind these things is that both these men were seriously overworked. They were generous givers of all that they had—time and talents and prayers and life itself. Had the flame not burned so fiercely it would have burned longer; but the will of the Lord be done. But now that they have gone, I, who loved them in life, treasure all that I have noted of their conversation, as one treasures the memory of rare hours spent among the heather with the larks singing overhead.

"I count myself in nothing else so happy
As in a soul remembering my good friends."

XV

AS I search through my diaries and note-books, one talk with Grant especially seems quotable here, but in case the reader does not find in it illustrations of the qualities which I have ascribed to him, I may again enter a warning. Grant was indefinite; there was in him such a subtle, supple mind that he was this, and not this; that, and not that. He was no problem in mathematics which could be accurately and finally solved; he was a problem in philosophy, which each mind solved according to its ability. But, certainly, to me the talk following, which I report, as I know, with considerable accuracy, is full of his distinct and lovable characteristics.

We had been at a Bible Society meeting, he and I. It ended early in the evening, and, as he had a visit to pay somewhere, we walked together. When we turned into Union Street the sight of the great church which keeps the eastern march reminded him of a dream he had the night before. He had dreamed that he was at a meeting sitting beside Mr. M. P. Johnstone, minister once of the church before us, friendliest of men, whom God has these

years in His gracious keeping. "I dreamed," said Grant, "that he and I were sitting together in some gathering in his own church there, and nothing at all unusual about anything. But all at once Johnstone turned to me and said, 'Look here, Grant, this is your dream. Whatever have I got to do in your dream? Dream the nuisance of a thing out by yourself,' and he rose and walked out."

"That's like Johnstone," I said, "he was the biggest-hearted and least patient of men."

"He didn't like being in my dreams anyway. I had better make a point of keeping him out of them after this. But wouldn't it be quite rational to expect that a man, such a large portion of whose time was employed attending meetings in life, should be a little impatient of them in the delivered life yonder?"

I asked him if he knew the poem in A. E. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, where the dead man questions his living friend about the things which he had left of earth. He remembered it, but to read it again we turned into the Greenock Library, where there is a copy. "Speaking of queer things," he said as we entered, "I remember that the old librarian here, Mr. Allan Park Paton, would not allow the famous American evangelist, Dr. Pentecost, to sign the visitors' book, on the score that he had an irreverent name. He said that the next day, as likely as not, there would be another Yankee coming along calling himself John of Patmos,

and, the day after that again, another calling himself Jesus Christ, so that he had to draw the line somewhere. I remember another thing about Mr. Paton, that he said that he liked to see a minister wringing his hands. You can work that out for yourself and see what it comes to."

"What has set you thinking of that bookman departed?" I asked.

"Why," he said, "look round these shelves. This is the very place to remember the dead. They are buried here. This is the shrine of poets dead and gone."

The girl in charge came forward. "Here," he added, "is the attendant priestess." She brought him the book desired, and he detained her while he read the beautiful stanzas :

"Is football playing
Along the river shore
With lads to chase the leather,
Now I stand up no more?

Ay, the ball is flying,
The lads play heart and soul;
The goal stands up, the keeper
Stands up to keep the goal.

Is my girl happy,
That I thought hard to leave,
And has she tired of weeping,
As she lies down at eve?

Ay, she lies down lightly,
She lies not down to weep:
Your girl is well contented.
Lie still, my lad, and sleep."

"I hope," he said to her, as he handed back the volume, "that when my soul escapes from my body it may be a soul above football—or cricket. No, my lady, I want neither earth's worries nor earth's entertainments to follow me to the other side. Nobody does, and that is why there are no ghosts. The dead may not be able to return. I don't know about that; but I'm sure they don't want to." "Not even to see those they love?" she said—a very woman's question. "No," he answered her, "for they have learned to wait. Death teaches them that. They are freed from impatience, and from our mortal nature's heats and colds."

He walked over to the case where there is kept the pride of the Library—the copy of the 1612 edition of North's *Plutarch*, supposed to have belonged to Shakespeare, and with the initials W. S. on the title-page and some curious markings throughout it. As he looked at it through the glass, the girl remarked, "I was born on the same day of the year as Shakespeare." "Now here," he said, smiling, "is encouragement for poets, that after three hundred odd Aprils a girl should boast that she has the same birthday as one of them. But all the same, that small fact really is a passport to distinction. Because of it, you doubtless write sonnets too."

The librarian, Mr. Shaw, coming in at this moment and producing his keys, the case was opened and the precious volume taken out.

Grant turned the leaves over, putting his hand in the position the writer would use, who wrote the initials and made the marginal marks. "Suppose he were Shakespeare!" he said. "It is not difficult. I have seen Dover Cliff. My eyes have rested where his did, and my hands now where his rested." And when the volume was put back into the case he peered down at it, murmuring some of the names of the famous Greeks and Romans whose stories are told there,—"Pericles, Cato, Themistocles, Cæsar." "A chronicle of wasted time!" he added, "how well Shakespeare describes it! But think of him, lord of all the worlds of romance and fancy that are in such books as this, tumbling into that Stratford grave:

> 'And my large kingdom for a little grave,
> A little little grave, an obscure grave.'

That's in *King Richard II.*, I think."

As we walked along the street my thoughts reverted to his dream. "Hamlet," I reminded him, "says, 'I could count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.'"

"I have no bad dreams," Grant answered me, "unless it be dreaming sometimes that I am staying at an hotel without money to pay the bill. Rather, I have one good dream which is very persistent. For I hardly ever awake from sleep nowadays without finding myself engaging in the act of prayer."

The significance of this struck me. "Is that so, Grant? Then it is just what the text says, 'When I awake I am still with Thee.'"

He went on, "Prayer is my Fourth Dimension. When I am alone I cannot think on any theme without bringing in God; and of all intellectual—not to say spiritual—pleasures my chiefest is to talk of Him."

"Talk of Him here then," I said, for we were walking through the slums of Greenock, slums as bad as any in the world. The sour smell of poverty was everywhere, the smell of misery. The narrow street was a deep ditch that echoed to fearful words. Little girls sat on doorsteps nursing babies not so much younger than themselves—poor little mothers of the poor. A woman crept along the wall, cursing with drunken tongue. "Talk of God here, Grant," I said.

"I can imagine no place where it is more necessary to talk of Him," he replied. "If you talked of Him here, with persistence and with passion, you would talk the slums away. It is because the slum is pagan that it remains a slum. It believes in dirty, sensual, drunken gods, like the gods of Greece. Make the people who own the slum and the people who live in it and the Corporation which tolerates it believe in a God, worthy to be the God and Father of Christ, and the slum will disappear like a puff of smoke. If every Christian man

and woman who passed through this dismal street talked to God and talked of God all the time they were passing through, these terrible houses would fall like the walls of Jericho. They stand because we are not talking enough of God, or because we are talking only up there"—and he pointed to the church spires that overhung the dismal streets.

"I am sure," I said, "that there are scores of people in Greenock who never pass this way without a prayer." He did not reply.

We walked on, and at a close-mouth a group of girls and lads were standing. As we passed, one of the girls used the name of Christ as an oath, and, hearing, he said to me, "That is the final horror of which human lips are capable. I read in a French book that the utter degradation of a girl in Paris is shown by her being willing to eat her food from unwashed plates. Even more so here is the use of that oath the brand of a lost soul. It is devilry. Here in this Greenock street to-night, you and I have met Satan."

"Sheer ignorance," I suggested.

"The worst of devils," he replied. "Now, I never hear that Sacred Name spoken in that awful way without determining at once to speak it in somebody's ears, in the most tender and reverent manner possible—by way of atonement to IT and HIM. Now here . . ." and before I guessed his intention, he had stopped two persons who were passing.

One was a woman, who, as far as I could judge by the lamplight near, was old and drink-sodden. She spoke in a kind of hissing cackle. "Hag" is the word to describe her. The other was a young girl about fourteen. Grant saluted them as if they were dressed in furs. "Well," he said, just as if they were known members of his Church, "and what are you about to-night?" The girl would have passed on, but the woman, according to her kind, paused to talk. She may have taken us for Roman priests, or, if she did not, considered us good enough substitutes. At any rate, she poured out her story at once and without the slightest reserve. "Yer Riverence, this is me granddaughter. And her mother — me own daughter that was — is dead, rest her soul! But when she was in life it was herself was the good woman, better than me, an' God help me! An' when she was in life didn't she go an' bring home her man, the villin, under her arm. Ay, did she, an' it's into the bar she wud go for him, an' bring him out whether he wud or no, the dirty soak. An' now she's gone to glory, an' me an' me eldest granddaughter has the job, an' it takes the two of us at it. He's give me the black eye I'm wearing this minute the last Saturday, but praise the Lord, he's got my marks on him too—the ould dirty blackguard. But most times he comes like a lamb; I'll say that for him now, your Riverence, most times he does."

"Come on, gran," said the girl, drawing her shawl about her head.

"Wheest, Molly, till I tell his Riverence. Ye see if it's alone we left him in there he'd come out wi' nothin' at all o' his pay t' give the wee childer a bite in their mouths, so me and my granddaughter gets a good hould o' him and hauls him out, him an' what's left o' the good money in his pocket. But when Molly can go t' the mill, an' that's near hand now, the wee ones 'll be set an' settled, an' he can pipe to hell his own road."

"Come on, gran, will you?" said the girl again.

Grant put his hand on the old woman's shoulder and simply, as if she were a saintly lady, blessed her. "Go," he said, "in the name of Jesus Christ; take Him with you."

"Yes," he said to me as we walked on, "Christ will be quite willing to go with a foul-mouthed and foul-smelling old woman, trying in an angry way to help her grandchildren, or I am much mistaken in Him." "I suppose," he went on, "that we could stop almost any one in this sad, murmuring street, and discover something interesting. Every human life has a thread of its own, and there are bits of beauty and bits of terror in every soul. I remember once being at Ayr Station, waiting for a train; and there was a little boy running up and down the platform, skipping and singing. And his song resolved itself into the refrain, 'I've got a kizzen comin' frae Cumnock. I've got a kizzen

comin' frae Cumnock.' I said to him, 'What will your cousin give you now?' 'Maybe sixpence,' he said, and off he went again, dancing along and singing, 'I've got a kizzen comin' frae Cumnock.' A man there was sweeping out the waiting-rooms, doing the most menial work about the place, and wanting an arm and most ill-thriven looking. I said to him, 'How much would it take to set you dancing and singing like that boy?' 'No' much, sir,' he said, 'for I'm singin' inside me a' the time.' And taking off his cap he lifted his face to the sky above. 'Ay, sir,' he said, 'just that—

"In God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be."'"

"To each his own particular dream," I quoted.

"Not a dream," replied Grant, "but an eternal reality of the soul. Often, when I have a pain at my heart, I remember that man at Ayr Station full of disabilities and faith."

"Robertson of Irvine said of one of his elders," said I, "'He's a man who fears God an' maks shoon.'"

"But that's easy," replied Grant, "for to make anything—even shoon—is to be a craftsman like God Himself, Who was proud of the world He made. The difficulty is in sweeping out a dirty waiting-room and being sure of an eternal mansion. To be a scavenger and a saint is a really brilliant combination."

XVI

I HAVE reported that conversation pretty fully, because in it we see him at work. He was always busy thinking, praying, blessing. "A minister," he said, "need never have an idle minute. Walking along the street he may, as Henry Ward Beecher did, discover treasure—or even among the porters in a railway station. And there are sad hearts everywhere." Let me illustrate him further by an extract or two from his letters. Here is a bit of one, sent to his sister in the June of 1908, during his trip on the Continent. Writing of an old lady he met then, he says:

> "She is blind of one eye with cataract and lives to dictate letters to her secretary, and to visit her husband's grave. She is English; he was an Italian general. He died at Berne, but as in Switzerland graves are absolutely the property of the State, she brought the body to Eviant, which, being French, allowed her to buy the grave, and she is now able to wait in the expectation of resting beside him, and so fulfilling his dying wish. 'And I hope

I shall not have long to wait,' said the old lady. She said that she had spoken to no one for many a year as she had done to me, and she could not tell why. It was a whiff of the Eternal, blown down on this shore of trippers, and it made one feel that those wind-wafts come oftener even here than the waiters believe. But I dare say they come at times to the waiters also."

One comments on that story to the effect that Grant himself was a whiff of the Eternal, and we feel that on that shore of trippers he would bear himself as the Prophet of God, and as the Bayard of his Church, whose reputation was ever safe in his charge. Said Professor Hugh Mackintosh, "If all the Churches in the land were to be judged by a representative, I would choose for the United Free Church Alexander Duncan Grant, and have no fear of the result."

It is a far cry from the Swiss-French frontier back to Greenock Infirmary, but one other extract from his letters takes us there, and must be given for the light it throws on some of the things I have already written of him. It was penned in the April before he died, and runs thus :

"After visiting my friend I went round the ward, of course, and I especially went to the bed of a young railway porter, who had fallen out of a train the other day

between Gourock and Port-Glasgow, because the handle of the door was not properly fastened. He said to me, 'You know me, Mr. Grant.' I looked at the card above his head and read his name. I said, 'You are not the lad I used to know at the West Station?' 'Yes.' You remember the boy who sold papers there, to whom I gave so many pennies for telling me the date of Waterloo and of Bannockburn, etc. You may remember his reply when he asked me twice in one day for a penny, and the second time I refused when he said, 'I'll buy a *hime* book with this penny.' He has turned out a fine young fellow, and is now a worker in a mission. He remembers a great many of the things I said to him. He said he would have 'yelled' to me when he saw me come into the ward, if I had not come round to him."

In all these things it seems to me that he bears himself as a very Christian gentleman, wise, tolerant, humorous. And I would add one other quality, which the recollection of a little talk I had with him once suggests. We had been speaking of the various kinds of inefficient ministers, whom he described as "Atti-, Plati-, Lati-tudinarians," and I asked him, "Grant, setting aside the message and the sympathy, the Grace of God in a word, what

think you is the quality a minister requires most to possess?"

He answered me: "Dr. John James Bonar was asked that question once, and he replied, 'Gumption,' meaning, as he explained, 'Tact,' which Emerson calls 'The art of all arts'; but when Dr. Andrew Bonar heard of it he said, 'No, it is Courage,' and I think that Dr. Andrew was right."

"These are widely different answers," I hazarded, "for what we call 'Tact' is often just a frilled Cowardice. It really requires a good deal of courage to drive a minister through his daily duties, saying and doing the right thing, in spite of every temptation to be a trimmer."

Now Grant had courage. His was a sinewy soul, in spite of all the delicacy and fastidiousness of his manner. One felt that in him the Church had a man in whom there was no baseness, no cowardice. He was incapable of any meanness. His life and bearing persuaded the eyes of men of the beauty of Christlikeness, and of the solemn dignity of a human soul; and because of the stout heart of him he was the most lovable and gracious of men, as he was the most tender and holy of ministers.

This quality of courage is perhaps not capable of sustaining examples. It does not show itself in isolated instances so much as in the whole dignity of the man; but, perhaps, if I tell of his conduct in circumstances repugnant to his mind, one may have a glimpse of what I

"If all the Churches in the land were to be judged by a representative; I would choose for the United Free Church, ALEXANDER DUNCAN GRANT, and have no fear of the result."

mean when I speak of the core of courage in him. I was walking with him along a street in Greenock one day, when we came on a man lounging at a street corner. Just when we were abreast of him, there hove in sight another man, raging, inflamed with drink and all brutal passions. Espying the lounger he came rushing at him bawling, with oaths I suppress, "You-you-you, I want a punch at YOU. You-you, I want a punch at YOU." The attitude of the man was so violent, and his intention so cruel, and his language so dreadful that everybody cleared out of his way, as he came, with clenched fists and red eyes and mouth literally foaming, to wreak his vengeance on his foe;—all save Grant, who quietly stepped in the man's way. "Have a punch at me instead," he said. The fellow stopped, dazed, and looked at the quiet grizzled face in wonder. Some women got round the first man and hustled him out of sight. The truculency of the other seemed to evaporate. In a way I can hardly now tell, he too had disappeared, and Grant and I were walking on.

Many people might act thus and awaken our applause but not our surprise,—it depends upon the kind of man. But think of Grant, fastidious, reserved, delicate and punctilious in all affairs of life—think of Grant doing it! To yield one's habits to dissolution even for half a minute, and make a rent in one's mental raiment, is for all of us a thing almost beyond

our resolution. So I count that story as not an altogether futile example of his core of courage.

I must give another example to show the fertility of the field, and I make this selection, not because the instance is better than others, but because it is a tale which has been mutilated on the public lip and even ascribed to Struthers. This, however, is the true version, as I had it from Grant himself. Again it is a scene of the street—the steep straight street which is there by dozens in Greenock. He observed a boy struggling up one with a load. It was a very heavy basket, and the little message boy was hard put to it to get on. Now Grant was a great burden-bearer, as has already been said. He had a very tender affection for the often over-worked and weary messengers of the shops, so he stepped up to the boy. His quick eyes had of course seen what was in the basket, but that did not make him hesitate. He took it in his hand, and, with the little chap at his side, walked up Forsyth Street, carrying, for all the world to see, a basket full of bottles of BEER. Now, here again, one has to remember who and what he was—one of the best-known and most strenuous temperance advocates in the West, President of the Christian Endeavourers of Scotland, a minister whose every action was noted and remembered—and then one sees how kind and bold he was.

When Grant told me the story I congratu-

lated him on his audacity, and suggested that he should receive a medal for it—a poor joke, I am afraid. Upon which he described meeting on a river steamer a barber, who came up from below with his razor and comb sticking out of his waistcoat pocket and with three medals strung on his watch-chain. Grant, falling into conversation with him, asked him what these were for, with thoughts perhaps of heroic medalled deeds and battles won. The barber was quite willing to tell—"Ane's for the lang jump, ane's for pigeon-homin', an' ane's for total abstainin'." "What," queried Grant, "do you mean by total abstainin'?" "Jinin' maist members to the Ludge in a year." Here was, after all, a fellow-worker in the fields of Temperance, and I am certain that these two did not part without some confidences and encouragements exchanged. For Grant was a great appreciator.

Somebody said that when Thoreau died there was no one left to appreciate the vast silence of the American forest. And when Grant died we felt that there was no one left to appreciate the little triumphs of little men. The talent that none else observed, the success that none else remarked, found warm commendation from him. Those shrewd observing eyes kindled to praise and to encourage, and there is no one left so kindly and so deft now that he is gone. I remember hearing him say: "The gifts of fragrance that

the wise men brought to Jesus would make sweet the road they came. Deliciously the myrrh would smell even through its wrappings; there would be a trail of perfume from east to west." That was just Grant's life—a trail of perfume from east to west—a life of kindnesses.

XVII

AND, though he was slower to praise, and with a decided thread of Scots dourness running through him, the same can be fully said of Struthers. He also was greatly given to giving, and was a man most original in his kindness, and perhaps there is nothing in which originality is more rare and therefore more precious: our benevolence is apt to dress in ready-mades. There, for instance, was the famous stone in his garden wall. Everybody knew about it, for it abutted upon the road—the Esplanade where people passed continually. On that stone he laid little bunches of flowers for any passer-by to take, an original thing to do. Throughout the long years of his residence there that was done. Daily, and often several times a day, the fragrant sacrifice was laid upon the little stone altar, a share of the beauty of his garden, which he offered to whomsoever list to take it. And, as with most of the ways of him, stories and legends gathered round the action.

It puzzled some people; it was quite beyond their comprehension. A Bailie even asked him if he put out these flowers and then waited

behind the wall to pounce in wrath on those who touched them—"which just shows, as *The Morning Watch* existed to prove." But then there were other minds. One young lady tells that she saw three lovely roses there one morning, and along came two tramps, who had been sleeping on one of the Esplanade seats. They spied the roses, evidently knew what they were there for, and each took one, leaving one. If we are to be judged by what we do not take, as Grant used to say we would, with what judgment shall we judge those wastrels?

And because every beautiful action has children born to it—other actions of lovingness—at that little altar on the garden wall beautiful things were done. Many a lover, passing there, has taken a pansy hence to give to his sweetheart beside him, an offering to the Love which keeps this old earth ever young. And there was a girl who walked that way of a morning and used to lift the freshly cut blooms and kiss them, and after her came a lad, hastening another airt, but who always stayed his steps beside the altar to find the kiss.

And, recalling such comely things, here is a tale, with a sadness and yet with something of a grace in it, that is told of Struthers. As all Greenock knows, he had a very great deal to do with the House of Refuge, where, often on two evenings of the week, he was to be found.

His labours for the women there were endless. Frequently it happened, when they were voluntary inmates, that they would leave to join their friends. Then he would see them away, or, if they returned, would meet them, sparing himself in no way. He would wait long hours at the riverside for a boat in which he might suspect the presence of some one he could help, and maintaining throughout the vigil "an entirely Christian temper," as the sentences I quote now of a happy letter show:

"PILOT STATION, 3.30 A.M.

"MY DEAR GRANT,—I am now at Princes Pier waiting for the Irish boat, Cassiopeia being—but it's too cold for astronomy: only I'm engaged on *The Morning Watch*, ill-starred periodical."

He goes on to urge Grant to take up some special work, and ends thus—very cheerfully, I think, for 3.30 a.m.:

"It would give you a lot of toil and worry and insult, but England expects every man—England expects—this day—this day—to do—to do his—to-day—to do his DUTY."

"Toil and worry and insult" were what he received himself often for his House of Refuge work. It was heart-breaking, and went far to shorten his days; and in hours of discourage-

ment he would say that all the good he did there was to keep his gate swinging easy on its hinges, by reason of the coming and going about his house of multitudinous beggars. Perhaps; but it is God who knows a man's work and not even a man himself.

So, now, to my story. In talking to Struthers once, on the occasion of his desiring to lay down that burden, if I would take it up, he told me how far from heartening the labour was, and how leaden-footed sometimes he came home from that House of Tears, but summed it up thus—"*I would seek unto God, and unto God would I commit my cause: which doeth great things and unsearchable; marvellous things without number.*" And then, evidently running down the rest of the passage in his mind—it is the 5th chapter of Job—he came to "*He saveth the poor from their mouth.*" "From their mouth!" he said to me. "If you go up there among those people, pray to be saved from their mouth. But, when I mind that text, it comes to me that some years ago there were two girls, very bad girls I am afraid, and they left the House of Refuge and went back to the streets. So I had to seek them and persuade them to return; and at last one day I met them together, very downcast—the ways of the wicked are as darkness—and I reasoned with them all I could. At last one of them said, 'We'll come back to the home if you'll take us in a cab.' So we struck the bargain, and I went off and

got a cab then and there, put them into it and went with them.

"We had to drive through the busiest streets with plenty of bad men about, and women too, I fear, who would jeer at me. Perhaps it was weak of me—I should be ashamed of myself—but I couldn't help praying to be saved from their mouth. One of the girls—they were sitting opposite to me—leaned forward and began to breathe on the window of the cab, so that she covered it with the steam of her breath. The other looked at her a moment and then started to the other window. I said, 'What are you doing that for?' And they said, 'Oh! we're jist playin' hide an' seek, same as we did when we were kiddies,' and then more soberly, 'It's no' for the likes o' you to be seen wi' the likes o' us.' That made me all shivery, and I was going to stop them, when I minded that I had just prayed to be delivered out of the mouths of the crafty, and God was doing it by opening the mouths of the two poor creatures with me—ay, by the very breath of their mouths."

That is a sad story, a story that is concerned with the aftermath of human wickedness in its most dreadful shape, yet it is not without grace, as I have said, for there is in it the presence of God. I listened to the tale in silence, for what could I say? And when he had finished he was silent too a moment, and then he made this startling, daring comment, "I sometimes

have thought that the best line in the Paraphrases is :

'O spread Thy covering wings around,'

and these were very dreadful wings to be covered by, but I believe they were God's wings all the same."

XVIII

IT will be seen from these instances how public a man Struthers was. His originalities, his kindnesses, his ways of life were generally observable. He belonged to the people in a way Grant never did. Grant's greatness was a hothouse plant; it bloomed within his study walls, and only a few, comparatively, knew how lovely a thing it was. The name of Struthers was blown like thistledown on every wind: the name of Grant lay hidden like acorns in the grass. Yet they were dear friends and confidants, "men of the knotted heart." There is a proverb of Spain, "The fiddler and the bagpiper agree very well," which means, I suppose, that the love of music is such a master-passion as to weld men together, however different is their art. And Grant and Struthers were welded by *their* master-passion. For they were both followers of God and goodness: the love of Christ constrained them. But one of the difficulties I have had, in writing this account of them, has just been to define the difference between them. They were so like one another, and yet so utterly unlike. What one did, the other was not likely to do; what one said, the

other was not likely to say; for all that their lives conformed to the same pattern, were moulded by the same forces.

For an illustration of what I mean take two stories, one told of each of them in relation to a friend of theirs, the Rev. J. B. Thomson of Greenbank U.F. Church, Greenock, the brother of Joseph Thomson, the famous African explorer. The first story is about Struthers, and I give it as he told it in *The Morning Watch*:

> "One afternoon, on my way home, I saw him a good bit ahead of me. He was a man whose company made a long road short and any road delightful. I made what haste I could to catch up on him, but he walked fast, for he was tall and light of foot and had a springy gait. I did overtake him, however, and then I told him I had thought of whistling on him to make him stop, knowing he would not take it ill, but I had not whistled because the days of my whistling were past, and a futile whistle is indeed a 'vanity of vanities, and a striving after wind.' Mr. Thomson was well known all over the Church for his knowledge of music. He had a fine tenor voice and he played well on three or four instruments at least. I asked him if he had kept up his whistling powers. He smiled and said he thought he could still do a little that way. 'Can you whistle

with your fingers?' I asked. 'I think I could,' he said. 'You might let me hear you.' 'Wait till we get round the turn there, and see that there is nobody coming.' When we got to the bend there was happily no one in sight but one man who had his back to us, and he was 350 yards away. 'It's quite safe,' I said. And at that Mr. Thomson put the ends of his forefinger and thumb to his lips, and gave such a whistle as I never heard man or boy give for loudness in my life. The man in the distance turned round like a shot, and no wonder! And how Mr. Thomson blushed, while I laughed with envy and delight!"

Now I cannot imagine Grant urging a brother minister to whistle with his fingers. That was the difference between them. There was a boyishness about Struthers of which Grant had next to no part. Consequently Grant could never have written *The Morning Watch*, though he could inspire the mind that made it. The root cannot bear fruit, but it supplies the branch which does.

On the other hand, the story I have now to tell about Grant could never have been told of Struthers, though it is more difficult to know why. Before telling it I should say that Mr. Thomson died in the June of 1910, and I have the letter beside me which Grant wrote to his

own mother to tell her. He relates what Mrs. Thomson had told him, "that on Monday he seemed to be getting better and they were never alarmed. She said, 'What you need now, James, is a nice sleep,' and she crept out of his sight and turned to her sewing to give him a good chance of going over. Soon she was glad to hear him going over into the sleep she asked for. But, in time, the breathing grew heavy, and she got alarmed. And then she knew he would not wake. He was one of the very nicest men in every way that we had in the town." So, very tenderly, very pathetically, Grant writes; you feel the regret and hear the drip of the tears. On Sunday he was passing Greenbank Church, coming from his own service. Within, they were singing the requiem for the dead which we used to sing in the Presbyterian Churches at the Memorial Service:

"Now the labourer's task is o'er,
Now the battle-day is past;
Now upon the further shore
Lands the voyager at last.
Father, in Thy gracious keeping
Leave we now Thy servant sleeping."

Grant stopped on the pavement outside, uncovered his head, and stood there bowed and motionless, a noble and sorrowful figure, till the hymn was finished. Two men who passed that way, beloved and trusted elders of the Church of God in Greenock, paused

with the inclination strong in them to join him. But he seemed so apart, so transfigured by grief and worship, that they hardly dared.

Now such an action could not be told of Struthers, though again I say it is not easy to point out why. Perhaps because of the Cameronian strain in him, he never would lift his hat at the passing of a funeral on the street. I once asked him the reason, remarking that for myself I always saluted the passing of a king. "The King comes—even King Death—Salute, mortals!" But he only smiled and answered me with a quotation from Shakespeare: "And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?" And maybe the quotation fully explains, for he distrusted everything which gave undue honour to mortality, and every ceremony which had in it any suggestion of the Church Catholic and Roman. At any rate, if Struthers had heard the music within Greenbank, then, with a heart full of sad memories and melancholy thoughts, but with covered head, he would have walked softly on.

XIX

IT follows, then, from what I have told of him, that everywhere and from everybody Grant found a very deep affection. His graciousness took him "far ben" in our hearts, and, when he died, fountains of tears, that had not flowed for long years, opened like the windows of heaven. And Struthers, rugged and commanding figure, had certainly also his full share of human love. He, like Grant, was fortunate in all things—in his home, in his work, in his friends, in his reputation, even in the hour and manner of his death.

For they were both supremely happy men. Almost always overworked, conscious of the accumulating burdens and of the demand the world was increasingly making upon their sympathies and prayers, they turned upon life a genial face. Grant wrote: "There is enough matter in the world to warrant the most hopeless philosophy, unless you take a big enough world to look at and throw some colour of your own all over it." And this is just what they did; they took a big world to look at—they took the World-to-come. And the colour of their own, which they threw over all, was the delicate tint

Mr STRUTHERS AT HIS GARDEN GATE.

Little Girl—"Gie's a haa'pny's worth o' floo-ers."

of that Charity which thinketh no evil. To them, therefore, the world's meaning was good; they were splendid optimists.

Somebody quoted to Grant the saying: "Ministers see men at their best, lawyers at their worst, and doctors see them as they are." "No," he said, "that is not quite accurate; ministers see men as they are, *and therefore at their best.*" That is to say, virtue is normal and sin abnormal, which is a very heartening thing to think, and we have deep need to think it. He used to say, too, that he was glad he was a minister, for that it is mainly ministers who see the Beauty in men's lives. Upon my remarking that there was something more than Beauty in life, he said, "Have you forgotten your Keats?

> 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
> Ye know on earth and all ye need to know'!"

So I say they were supremely happy men, clean, innocent, sincere, full of cheerfulness and good humour and fun. In one of his letters Struthers tells a story: "Old Mrs. M'Kinlay has had an offer of a room in Caddlehill Home. She is very unwilling to go. I said, 'If you saw the wagons at the door, your heart would revive, and you would say, I will go to Canaan.' 'No, no,' she said, 'the wagons would take me to Egypt.' When she saw me smiling she added, 'And yet they were very comfortable in Egypt—for a time.'" And of these men it can

be said that they were very comfortable in Egypt "for a time," and with their fun and their wit and their pleasant ironies they distinctly brightened Greenock for the folk in it. They were great lighteners of the load; to walk with them was to forget the length of the miles.

Stories there are innumerable told of both of them, especially of Struthers, but to taste the flavour of these one would need to be the Witch of Endor and call up the prophet. And as in the case of most humorists, examples of their fun become insipid without the humorists themselves. They were both clever and discriminating punsters, but what is a pun outside the occasion which produced it and without the enigmatical smile of the speaker? Still, here is one of Struthers's. He was travelling north once, and, changing at Georgemas Junction, got into a carriage with a woman whose first baby, two months old, was roaring like a lion. She had come all the way from Edinburgh and was going to Thurso. It was her baby's first day out. "Well," said Struthers, "you've begun to *train* your child very early, and you've *trained* him pretty well to start with."

To appreciate that voluminous pun one must needs recall the solemn face, the grave look, the trembling lip, the deep voice—the general make-up of the man. Then one laughs. One wonders indeed how many people really understood him, how many appreciated him.

Most, who talked to him, had to labour after him, like sparrows trying to follow the flight of the heron. Of that he gives a good example himself in one of his letters :

> " I was talking to a very ignorant man —dying—the other night—a bad man ; fond of hearing stories of travel. I wanted to make him see God's Love, and told him some of my very best twenty-minutes' long coincidence stories. ' Ay,' he says, ' it's queer, but I've seed the same thing happening to myself. I seed a man in Toronto onst, and I knew him and he knew me ; and I was sorry I didna speak to him.' "

Consequently, to the usual kind of person Struthers was an awkward opponent in any argument. He had a way of getting under one's guard, in an ironic and disconcerting manner, which was all of a piece with his unexpectedness. For example, at a monument yard he was once examining the inscription on a stone when the sculptor appeared, and, recognising the visitor or his profession, began to talk about ministers in a somewhat offensive manner. " Yes," said the man, " I was a beadle for eight years, and know all about ministers." " Yes," interjected Struthers, " and you won't get ordinary courtesy from them, I tell you." That was rather a hard boulder for the average conversationalist to surmount.

And Grant also had that gift of irony, which I think educated Scotsmen have above all others, and which makes them not always easy to understand. So as critics of life and as expositors of the deep things of life, and as gentle, smiling masters of goodly things, I have never met nor heard of any like to them. They lived serene and they lived happy.

To round off what I have said of their smiling ways, I quote a letter of Grant's, written when he was in Switzerland, the year he celebrated the end of his fifth lustrum of life and work in Greenock, and in which some of the things I have been saying of him and his friend are illustrated; for a letter reveals not only the man who writes it, but the man to whom it is written:

> "My dear Struthers,—I am writing you on the water, and the throbbing of the engines affects my—spelling. There is a certain dignity about a letter coming from Geneva, where I hope to post this.
>
> "I am within sight of Mont Blanc, which has been pointed out to me seven or eight times a day, in four or five directions. I am not now surprised that it is so often under a cloud, for it seems to lead quite a vagabond existence.
>
> "My chief impression of Switzerland is a gratifying surprise at the number of very nice people from England and Scot-

land who come to see it. From the time we entered the train at Charing Cross till now, we have never been without people, whom we may call friends for their courtesy and interest. I think I am the most taciturn person I have come across on this continent, and it must either be my wife's charm or my quality as a listener, or that look of a certain kind of goodness about me, that the man on Loch Fyne-side detected a year or two ago, that has secured us this grace. We have already repeatedly received cards and offers of continued friendship and hospitality. That means a good deal of human friendship."

[I must here interject that Grant was greatly encouraged by a remark Sir Hugh Shaw Stewart made to him, that he (that is, Sir Hugh) was struck by the number of people in the world who were trying to do a little good. That was the kind of remark Grant would help, or inspire, a man to make.]

"Yesterday we were sitting in a swelter on the roof of our hotel, ten stories up, when we saw a cloud of smoke trailing up the lake like a prairie fire. Before we got downstairs windows and doors were banging; it was night, and thunder was booming. When the dust darkness had passed and let in the day again, every one rushed to the lakeside, waiters forgetting their

duties in anxiety about the crowds of light pleasure-boats on the water. We saw the contest with beating hearts. Two lifeboats brought in two boats' companies, and the steamer crossing the lake rescued six people from the water. A lady who told me on Saturday that the way of transgressors was easy in Lausanne, as it was only half-fare on Sundays for sailing, was in the steamer and gave me a vivid account of the panic on board. She told me she would never say again what she had said to me or do the same on Sunday.

"I am getting on amazingly with my French. I have repeatedly found myself, to my wife's amusement, coming to the rescue of embarrassed countrywomen of my own in difficulties with tramway or railway officials. It is that same goodness, however, rather than capability that lands me in such situations. It is rather a mistake for a husband to allow himself to appear at a disadvantage continually, and to wait for his wife's arrival before an understanding can be arrived at. It is apt to cast suspicion on other classical claims that have hitherto been unquestioned, because they could not be tested. When my wife is bogged she says, 'Oh! that's a patois.'

"We have been up 8000 feet, seen Dent

du Midi, close in from base to summit —seen the Mönch and the Jungfrau, and everywhere Mont Blanc *ut supra.* Wonderful! Poor old Scotland! But if I were just once fairly back, the British Isles have enough unexplored delights to satisfy my modest desires for some time to come.

"We are nearing Geneva, and if you think how much I've denied to see to write you, then you will know I greatly meant to write.

"With all gracious good wishes.—I am, yours lovingly,

"A. D. GRANT."

So, very smilingly, he writes—one gentle mind communing with another, one happy man sending a loving message to his comrade, when they were separated for a time by great mountains.

But the obverse of happiness is melancholy, and the greatest humorists are often the greatest melancholians. In all lofty imaginations there is a touch of sadness, and those who know the most of the value of life know best its brittleness. And these men, with their wit and their humour, their fun, their wide acquaintance with the finest breathings of the human heart, were also very sad men. Of them both it may be said, what I have already written of one, that their lives were like the flight of the lapwing, which, as it wheels in

the air, shows now dark, now bright. They lived as they preached, intensely aware of the swift shuttle weaving remorselessly the web of their days.

One cannot turn over the pages of the *Watch*, or remember either of them in a characteristic conversation, without learning therefrom the Shadowed Lesson. Perhaps of the two Struthers had the more obvious melancholy. One needed to be very intimate with Grant to observe it, but it was written large on the very habit of John P. Struthers's life. People called him "unequal," "moody," or "dour," but it was a much finer thing; it was that divine sadness which is the attribute of fine souls, and without which no poet is perfect. For these two men were true poets. Their hearts had golden strings, that thrilled to Love and Laughter, but sighed with Sorrow too; for always they knew how soon Death would hush their song, and Time smother the very echo of it among his dark hills.

Let the reader hark back to the *Pereunt et Imputantur* incident, and, from what I have written now, see its deeper significance. Struthers's careful consideration of the Latin phrase, Grant's triumph in translating it, and the unrecorded talk that produced that translation, all are of a piece with that profound melancholy which was of the very stuff of which those happy men were made. "Bye, but not by-with"—the baffling day, the unfathomable night

THE SUN-DIAL AT ALL SOULS.

—the knowledge that, though we are such stuff as dreams are made of, we have all to stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ—the terrible fact that we fight against principalities and powers—these thoughts and visions were never absent from their minds, even in the moments of their mirth.

We are proud in Greenock, and justly, of what our eyes see to the North. There the great river and the firth blend; hills are set round, that change their hues with the seasons, white when winter sends the snows, or purple with the heather of September; fair towns, where life is sweet, couch upon the shores; and always the ships move across the face of the waters, departing or arriving, their flags fluttering at their mast-heads, while the notes of their horns, hooting their summonses, make the air itself full of the sound of existence. On this fair scene Struthers was gazing one sunny day, and near him a man, whom he knew very slightly, if at all, was standing. Moved by the thoughts that were in his mind, he suddenly turned from the sunlit scene before him and said to the man beside him: "Isn't the Tail of the Bank a very solemn place?" Yes, it is; but few in such weather would have remembered it. But he did. He remembered that it is a place of farewells, a place of ill news, a place where ships broken-winged and like to perish come—like sea-birds hurt. "A very solemn place," he called it. Scores of examples of this mood might in his case and in Grant's be given.

They were very happy in Egypt—"*for a time*"; but they always remembered it was Egypt: and they were always insisting that other people should remember.

In a light-hearted age such men are of incalculable value. Whether we like it or not, the preacher who obliges us to remember how brief our time is, does us great service. We are fond as a generation of the mood of defiance of Fate and Death—the "my-head-is-bloody-but-unbowed" pose. Struthers and Grant would have none of it. Let us go softly, they said, all our years in the bitterness of our souls. Three or four days before Struthers died, a motor cyclist tearing up Fox Street crashed into a hidden rut, and he went one way and his machine the other. Fortunately and marvellously, neither was hurt, and as they picked themselves up, Struthers came forward. "Aren't your bones broken?" he asked concernedly. "No," said the cyclist, "I'm all right. I'm one of those hard godly folk that are always getting through." "Then," said Struthers, "say your prayers." Even so; say your prayers. *That* was what he stood for—this humorist and melancholian. *That* was what Grant stood for. "Humble yourselves," they said, "in the sight of God. 'Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength.' Life is very dangerous—say your prayers."

XX

BUT at last drew near the time of their departure. For thirty-one years these friends and immortals had been together in Greenock, and they had passed from youth to within sight of old age's lambent peaks ; but, ere they reached those quiet and visioned hills, the Angel of the Summons met them. One began to see in them that touch of absence, that anticipation of the mind, which may be observed sometimes in those who have not far to go. About this time one of their friends heard Struthers preach on the text—*The shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country*—and felt as he listened an eeriness creep over his spirit. The preacher told how, when he was sailing in the Pacific, the captain of the ship announced that they were not far from land—deeming that they drew near to some country. Struthers said that he was himself on deck in the grey of the morning, watching the ship plunging through the seas. Before them was mist, veiling whatever land might be. But as the sun leapt into the sky, the mist divided like a curtain, and before them they saw the Golden Gate, the entrance to the harbour of San Francisco, in

the splendour of the morning, waiting, wonderful. And the preacher, when he had ended the story, lifted his eyes and gazed, as if he saw beyond all Space and Time, and, deeming that he drew near to some country, was waiting for the mists to unclose.

During these later days I had much talk with both of them, and my box of MSS. contains many notes of conversations and incidents of which they were the greater part. There was once, for example, not many weeks before his death, that Grant and I were together in the beautiful God's Garden where Greenock lays her dead. It was raining heavily, and we had just watched what was mortal of some friend of ours being hidden away in the wet clay; while the mourners, scourged by the implacable rain, had scattered ere the task was quite complete.

"Grant," I said, "I am here in this place on the business of my life often two or three times a week, but I have never accustomed my mind to the horror of it. The whole thing is so squalid."

"You forget," he answered me, waking out of his own thought, "that the essence of living is contrast. The frightfulness and squalor of Death are necessary, in order to give Life its value, and to emphasize how clean and lovely a thing Love is. I may say that I am always proud of God, but even prouder when I see how squalid, how loathsome, He has made

Death, in order that I might learn to enjoy Life the more, whether here or yonder. That is how a great artist works. Think of Scott's *Rob Roy*—one of my favourite books. In the last chapter, even, everything is going wrong. The heroine and her father are under arrest—she is going to a convent—her lover is to be parted from her for ever; and then there is a sudden twist of the action—and everything is all right. Or in *Quentin Durward*, which I am afraid I was reading at three o'clock the other morning, you recollect how Quentin loses his chance to kill the brigand chief; how the man who does kill him is going to fling his head into the river, and with it fling away the prize. Then there is that twist, and the thing is all right. We enjoy the happiness and the wedding bells, because unhappiness has just been missed by the merest trifle. Now God is the greatest Artist and Poet of all. He it is who makes the divinest contrasts. We are going down into the squalor and horror of that wet clay and be forgotten for ever and ever—cut off from Light and Freedom and Love throughout the stark eternities. Everything is going wrong. And then there is a flurry of wings, a breath of power, the trumpet call of God, 'Save from going down to the pit, for I have found a ransom,' and the sweet announcement of His Son, 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.'"

We passed through the consecrated ground,

and coming to a stone cross, erected to the memory of a parish priest, we stopped to read the inscription :

"THE CATHOLICS OF GREENOCK OFFER THIS CROSS AND PRAY."

"A little flock of beautiful words," he said.

"I have heard you say," I reminded him, "that 'superstition fills every fine thought with frost.' Your very phrase, I think."

"Don't use the word 'superstition' here," he answered reprovingly. "I must have told you before of trying to teach a little boy the relative values of money. I took a two-shilling piece and its equivalent in coppers and smaller silver out of my pocket, and laid them before him. Pointing to the two-shilling piece, I asked him, 'What's that?' 'Tails,' he said. And I say of that inscription on the cross that it is a little flock of beautiful words, and you say something about superstition, a word which is wholly irrelevant here."

"But you would not justify prayers for the dead?"

"Never as a part of my creed; but if I found myself surprised into a prayer for my beloved hidden in death, I would not be ashamed. The Catholics pray for the dead that they may be delivered from purgatory. I could never believe in purgatory, but I would pray for the dead that, in their love for me and by the help of God, they might admit no impediment between

my heart and theirs. That very prayer would help to keep green my memory of them, and steel my resolution to goodness."

"Heresy, Grant, without doubt! But tell me—there was your mother, parted from you only so many months . . .?"

"Yes. Well, from the time, now some years ago, when I realised her;—you know what I mean—like the man in R. L. Stevenson's poem who, in danger off the Horn, suddenly realises that his folks at home are growing old. Well, from that time I never ceased to pray for her, I cannot tell how many times a day. And, when she died, I found that it was a real deprivation to cease from praying for her. And when I ventured to do so once or twice, with due reserves, it comforted me like sunshine after rain."

"The dead die soon," he went on after a pause, "and that is well. We must not allow them to do our thinking for us, or hamper in any fashion the work of the living. But, on the other hand, the heart's dearest must never be forgotten. Otherwise we spoil our heaven. For to meet them there is the best alms Eternity can give us, and, if we are forgetting them, we are robbing ourselves of part of our future bliss. Our conscience will not permit us to be perfectly glad in heaven, if we have imperfectly loved and remembered here."

By this time we had come to the gate, and were passing from the Town of the Dead into

the Town of the Living. He turned and looked back at the wet trees, and the graves, and the railed limits, and the stones:

"*Christ keep the Hollow Land*," he whispered.

He was fond of such little benedictions or like salutations. I had noticed that when entering a meeting of the C.C.C.—the Clyde Clerical Club, an association of certain ministers as friends and students—he would sometimes stand at the door a minute, his lips moving. No one, of whom I inquired, ever caught the low words, but Struthers discovered that what he was saying on such occasions was, "*Christ is risen*"—a most fitting salutation for a band of disciples of the Word, gathered, as we frequently were, in an Upper Room.

THE HOLLOW LAND.

Mount Park Church in the background among the houses. The Minister lies beneath the wreath.

XXI

THE meeting of this Club on Tuesday, 20th January 1914, was the last occasion when some of his brethren saw Grant, for exactly a week later, to the very hour, God resumed his soul. With this Club he had been identified for twenty-eight years, and his real greatness, the graciousness of his character, the fertility of his mind, the lovableness which encompassed him like sunlight, were never so apparent as there, in that circle of comradeship. That afternoon the subject of debate was "Sin," and, to illustrate the point he was making, he told of a father he knew, who was administering a thrashing to his son for some offence, when the boy rather startled him by saying, "You've no business to treat me like this; I'm no' your laddie; I'm just lent to you."

This remark of the boy clung like a burr to my memory, and when, two days later—on Thursday—Grant and I went golfing together, I referred to it, indicating something about it being a trite thing to say that such and such was lent to us, but that on the lips of the boy, who was being punished, the triteness became originality and pungency. He answered that

he had been thinking of the remark too, but not along that line. Rather, that he had been considering how many things there had been in his life which had been only lent to him, and which now had been entirely or partially withdrawn. He spoke of dear friends with whom across those greens he had walked and played in years gone, and who now came seldom or no more that way.

As we thus talked, half-forgotten things clambered back into our memories. One by one he named some friends of ours whose affection had constantly been gentle, loyal, and agreeable; and odd little turns of thought or action were lovingly recalled. "Do you remember being up here one May morning?" he said. "There was a great burning of heather on the hills, and C., who was with us, called out, 'See how the smoke goes up! Doesn't it remind you of the sacrifice in the wilderness?' And then M. came over, his face flushed and lips pouting, to say, 'It's far too late for them to burn the heather. They have forgotten the nests and the young birds; it's a blazing shame.'" He smiled at the story as he told it, and I remarked that he could cap it with one of his favourites, for, when he was in a country town a year or so back, he had heard two farmers talking under his window in the rain.

"This 'll dae for your neeps, Craigends."

"It's no' a bit shoorie like this that 'll dae for ma neeps."

"Weel, gin we're thankfu' for what we get, we'll mebbe get mair."

This talk set him fairly off on his favourite theme—the personal equation. He held very strongly the dominion of mind over every circumstance. "Everything," he would say, "is to be examined and explained in terms of psychology. Before a man can live in a slum he must have a mind to live in a slum—a slum mind. A physical fact without a corresponding mental one is purely negative—in fact, it is merely stupid. Here is the philosophic basis of the Christian religion. It seeks to make men's minds sacred and luminous; and sacred and luminous facts follow therefrom. Given the pure heart, there follows therefrom all sorts of sumptuous facts and the vision of God."

I made some remark. "Now," he said in answer, "you are off on your wild way, hitching my lowly wagon to the stars; but I refuse to be carried through great spaces on a career for which I have as little capacity as desire." "It's curious," he went on, "how long it really takes to exhaust another man's mind. I might have known you would say that, and yet it surprises me. I have heard or invented—I do not now recollect which—an apologue that is apropos. There were two trees which grew together. They were great friends and confidants, and each thought that it knew the other and all its concerns through and through. But one day a boy called out, 'Here's a nest on

this branch,' and thus it was revealed that there was a secret, that everything had not been told between them."

We talked of Z., another of his friends—upon whom in late days there had fallen the most dreadful calamity of all, a tastelessness of life. Grant had gone to see him, and had been greatly troubled. He said, "He is incapable even of sorrow, and that is the most sorrowful of things. For emotion is life. Z. has ceased to feel emotion, and therefore is dead. In conversation with him I had the feeling that I was talking to a mummy."

"God save us from such a fate, Grant."

"I believe I am a long way off it, though I am also much given to sleeplessness, which is one of the causes of Z.'s condition. I told him, though, that what helped me to pass wakerife hours was just remembering the Insomnia of God:

> 'Behold, he that keeps Israel,
> he slumbers not, nor sleeps.'

At any rate, I find the world more and more fascinating. To me it is fuller than ever of glorious things. There, now, is the roar of that train," for we were playing the hole farthest from home, and about half a mile away, a train, bearing folk from the sea to the city, came speeding through the valley. "There is the roar of that train. To me it is like music: it talks of the strange and the romantic,

the unknown and the desirable. No, I am not tired of the earth. I have all my faculties, my hearing even being painfully acute; but I'm fifty-nine. And I wonder often, and I wonder now, what life has in store for me—if anything. I think I have told you before that, when a book of biography comes into my hands, I turn to the man's fifty-ninth year to see how many pages were left to him, and what he did in them. It is wonderful how many useful things people have found to do after fifty-nine."

I told him of knowing two men, brothers, equally gifted and useful and popular. The one was followed to the grave by a great procession, and his loss was mourned as a civic calamity. Ten years later, the other died, and only a little handful of relatives escorted his mortality to the grave.

"I see," he said, "in the interval he had become an unwanted man—a very sad thing. It may happen so in my case, for though I am not even beginning to be tired of earth, the earth may be beginning to be tired of me."

Thus we talked, as we sauntered from green to green, intent on our conversation rather than on golf. We sheltered from a shower, and he told me of Mr. Peter Reid, the tale which I have recounted towards the beginning of this book, and there were many other things said which I cannot tell now. But at length we came to the end of the round. The last hole is a bogie four,

and off a weak drive he made a good second, but landed short of the green by five or six yards. I lay dead with my third and got down in four. When he came to his ball he said, "If it were not for your criticism I would putt it." "Putt it, then, and disregard my criticism." He took his putter, and, standing left-handedly to the hole, surveyed the line. Then, easily, leisurely, he made his stroke. The ball ran along a ridge, and dipped on to the green. When nearly opposite to the hole and apparently passing it, there came a deflection. Thinking the ball was widely astray he had pursued it with his quaint objurgation, "You fellow, you!" but it ran up to the hole and dropped in. I have pleasure in thinking that his last stroke was such a fine one.

"What was that verse you sent me once in a letter?" he asked, as we stayed a minute there; and with a little puzzling I could repeat it:

> "And wheresoe'er your clubs you wield,
> May you have luck in drive and putt;
> Till, hastening from death's final cut,
> You play o'er some Elysian field."

And even then Death was taking up his stance to give to Grant that fatal final cut. For this was the parting that we had; there, though we did not know it, we were taking our farewells; there, on the smooth grass of the last green. I watched him as he took his unhasting way down the road. I do not know

why I watched him; perhaps God's kindly whisper was breathed across my spirit, warning me to gaze upon him as he passed, for that I would see his face no more: and I remember I was very heavy-hearted. He reached the corner and disappeared, lost to my sight till God brings our souls to the Immortal Tryst.

On the Tuesday following he went out in the morning to meet with a little company of Christian folk engaged on schemes of helpfulness, and, returning, at the steps of his garden he fell. None was near him, none saw him; he died there alone, breathing out his spirit in the faint silver lights of that January day. A lady, passing the garden gate a little later, saw him lie, and hurried in—but he was not, for God had taken him.

XXII

STRUTHERS had asked him once: "Supposing you knew for certain that death was pending, how long would you desire for preparation?" Grant thought a little, and then said, "Twenty minutes." Struthers had doubts about the wisdom of making this story public, for many people, he thought, would misunderstand, would be surprised that a man so good as Grant should want so long as twenty minutes; for the conventional idea of the Christian is that he is ready to go at any moment. But then Grant was not a conventional Christian; he was a Christian Greek. Struthers, when telling me this story, wondered how Grant would have spent his twenty minutes, and regretted that he had not asked him. I could but speculate then, but I have seen since, in Grant's copy of Plato's *Phædo*, a little mark in red opposite the passage where Socrates, condemned to die in a few hours, tells his friends the manner he and they had best spend the hours till the gaoler in the dusk would bring him the fatal hemlock cup:

"As I am going to another place I

ought to be thinking and talking of the nature of the pilgrimage I am about to make. What can I do better in the interval between this and the setting of the sun?"

And that red mark on the margin suggests vividly how Grant would have spent his twenty minutes. Fine and holy thoughts would have hovered round him, and found words on his dying lips; there would have been kneelings of the spirit and tender farewells. It would have been a wonderful twenty minutes. But it was not permitted; he was not given even one. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he was changed. And the words with which the *Phædo* concludes, in which, tenderly and proudly, Plato closes his account of the death of Socrates, may well be quoted here:

> "*Such was the end of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, the justest, and best of all the men whom I have ever known.*"

To which I may add the words that Struthers spoke when he with us had realised that his friend and "respected companion" had parted from him: "Well, heaven is no doubt a remarkable place, but I'll be sadly mistaken if Grant isn't an acquisition to it."

"I'm hoping," he said to me in those days, "to have a great big talk with Grant by and by.

That's a fine thing to look forward to. He used often to say about a fading thing or about somebody gone—'*It came—to pass,*' and I've been thinking one might add '*It passed—to be overtaken.*' God will keep that which we have committed to Him against that day."

XXIII

WHEN the war broke out and savagery leapt suddenly across all civil bounds, and great new moral questions, and strange thoughts of God and the Faith rose before the wondering eyes of men, Struthers would regret sadly that he had not Grant to talk to. "I would like to hear what he has to say about it," he would repeat. He became more vigilant in his economies, that, in these hours of need, he might have the more to give away; and what he did, and what he gave, and how, through those dark days, he prayed, we shall not know on this side of Jordan. But ever shone the austere beauty of his soul and the originality of his kindness.

When the recruits of the New Army were drilling on the Esplanade, on the other side of his garden wall, he would wait till there was a pause, and then, sallying out, would ask permission of the officer in command, and, walking down the ranks, would present each man with a peppermint ball, one to each, no more, no less, and then smilingly retire. That story must recall him to friend and acquaintance. We see the grave wise face, the gleaming

spectacled eyes, the grey moustache; we see him walking down the ranks, slightly dragging one foot and swaying a little as if for weariness; while the soldiers smile and nod, each one receiving the modest little gift according to the spirit that is in him.

Again, he would go in those days and gaze long at the grey warships, like the *Tiger* or the *Undaunted*, lying in harbour or out at the moorings. He said: "I like to look at those ships and at the officers, some of whom have very sweet faces and blush like girls. One never knows how famous they may become." So he lived through those days, praying much, giving much, and ever drawing nearer to Home. I think he was aware of failing strength. "My lamp is going out," I heard him murmur, but he was only sixty-three. He had said in a sermon:

> "Some bit is shaking. We feel our memory going. We are not so quick at catching things; our intellectual capacity is not so great as it once was. Or we are getting weary of limb; we fumble with our fingers, or as we say, 'They are all thumbs.' Our hearing is not so good as it was; evidently there is something wrong. It is a sign we are putting off this tabernacle. We notice it in others. We see them getting frail like an old tent, patched and worn. We say, 'It will go with the first storm.' And so we say of them, 'The

winter will try them. I don't think they will stand it.'"

These sentences are surely autobiographical.

About this time I asked him—repeating his question to Grant—what time he would like to have in order to prepare for departure. He said, "I would like long enough to finish that month's number of the *Watch*." In his whimsical fashion he used to play with the idea of growing a very old man, and still struggling to carry on the little paper, he and Mrs. Struthers together, but with failing powers. He would describe how it might happen, that in their extreme old age they would issue numbers in which the sentences lacked verbs, or where there was a figure which had a nose in the wrong place.

But he was spared such quaint humiliations. The 1915 January number of the *Watch* came complete from his hand, but, ere the February number was finished, the far Voice called him beyond the dark and the dream. It is interesting to note that the last words of his, published in his lifetime, appeared in the *Glasgow Herald* on the eleventh of that month, where he contributed the results of his analysis of the names in the marriage and obituary columns of that paper during 1914. This contribution was sent in under the name "Nomen Omen," a phrase from Plautus, which means that a name may be a portent, that as we are called so we may become, an idea of which the

Bible furnishes many examples, the best of all being Jesus, *the Saviour*:—Nomen Omen.

This classifying of names was one of Struthers's amusements, and, like all that he did, reveals character and originality. In that contribution, after noticing the masculine names, how there were 1158 Johns, and 5 Rolands for 3 Olivers, and so on, he writes of the names of women. Margaret, he notes, was first in pride of place, and Mary next; and, after noticing the rest, he closes the short contribution with these Struthersesque sentences:

> "Of more or less vain efforts to please male relatives one notes Archina, Andrewina, Hectorina, Davidina, Neilina, Peterina, Jacobina, and Isaacina. Of old Scots names, Nicholas two, Grisell one; only one Dorcas too, though the land is now full of them. Of the names not yet absolutely threadbare, one may commend to happy but distracted parents, Penelope, Iphigenia, Cordelia, Petronella, Joy, Hope, Harmony, and Euphrasie for choice, 'and, last, an Amethyst.'"

"And, last, an Amethyst." So his final word, which in his lifetime showed itself in print, was the name of a precious stone, one which John of the Apocalypse had beheld set in the mystic foundations of that White and Shaded City of God which Struthers was so soon to see. Nomen Omen!

The closing scene is all connected with his church and the worship there. It is a beautiful little building, and to enter it now is to be thronged with thoughts of him whose spiritual home it was. Speaking once there he said:

> "We meet on the Sabbath Day in God's House; our surroundings remind us of the dead in Christ. We see their dedicated things, their children, their belongings, their Bibles still in their seats. We go to another seat; we take up a book and look at the name. A strange history that person had. We are afraid to think of it."

And, looking at the church and all that is in it, and his spiritual children, and his dedicated things, we wonder at the man who once preached there and whose voice is lost now in the Eternal Silence. What a strange man he was! What an influence for God! What a Benediction! How greatly different from other men!

Over the pulpit hangs a clock—a dedicated thing. On it are the Greek letters

EPXETAI NTΞ.

The Night Cometh. Thrilling it was to such as were compact of imagination to hear him preach the Word there, while overhead was that solemn, awesome admonition, *The Night Cometh* —words of warning and of pleading alike to

preacher and to hearer! And at last the Night came; and it came to him there under that terrible catafalque. Yet its advent was very beautiful and imperial.

Some time in December he had come to see me, to talk over the book he was to write on Grant, and, as we recalled the manner of our friend's going in the initial month of that year, I showed him in my copy of Montaigne the sentences with which that famous Frenchman begins his essay "Against Idleness":

> "The Emperor Vespasian, sicke of the disease whereof he died, uncessantly despatched many affairs of great consequence; and his Physitians chiding him, as of a thing hurtfull to his health, he answered, THAT AN EMPEROR SHOULD DIE STANDING. Loe heere a notable saying, fitting my humour, and worthy a great Prince."

And we said to one another that, if it were God's will, we also would choose to die standing, as Grant died.

And so it happened to Struthers. On Sabbath, the 17th of January 1915, he preached in the morning in a quiet, untroubled way. There was present an old lady who, living far away among the hills, could not be in church often, and when he came down from the pulpit he spoke to her. "I'm back again, you see," she said, "like a bad sixpence." "Don't say that," he answered; "say, 'like the

lost piece of silver.'" Which reminds me of a sentence in one of his prayers—a humble, unforgettable sentence, "Lord, if we have not a place in Thy purse, let us be found among the sweepings of the floor."

In the afternoon, preaching upon the Love of God, of all themes that which he liked the best, he faltered a moment—recovered—spoke a word or two, and then fell on the pulpit floor—sinking at once into the mysterious deeps of obliviousness. Underneath were the Everlasting Arms.

He was taken to his house. During the slow hours of the night he emerged a little from unconsciousness, to murmur a prayer and to dimly recognise the face that hung over him; but to sink again, like a man drowning in the sea, who, in his struggles, rises into sight a moment, and then is lost in the tumult of waters.

Next morning, not long after dawning, God brought His servant HOME.

EPILOGUE

MY task is done. I have written of these men as I knew them, weaving my love of them and my regret for them into this wreath to lay upon their grave. And now that I have finished, there comes to me an understanding of what St. John felt, when he ended his writing of Him Who was the Master and the Saviour of these my friends. . . . *There are also many other things.*

Comrades of mine, or acquaintances, come to me, or send messages—for the news of this, my task, is abroad among them—bidding me not forget to tell some one thing or another of these men, and recalling to me delightful ways of each, or engaging tales.

A lady writes to say that I must be sure to indicate how Grant was the very soul of courtesy,—"a veray parfit gentill knight." Surely I have told that; but I look back over the pages I have penned, and I cannot see that I have. It may indeed be inferred, but in obedience to her letter, I lay here the emphasis of brief paragraphs on Grant's gentlemanliness.

He said to me once, "For years I schooled

myself that I might be worthy to be put in the office of the ministry, and in nothing did I find that schooling so hard, as in the matter of learning to give way on all occasions. You remember Shakespeare with his:

> 'Falsehood
> Is worse in kings than beggars.'

And discourtesy, always a sin, for that it darkens the world, is worse in ministers than in any one else, because they are the Apostles of Light."

I have seen him on the golf course, which is often a very un-Christian sort of place, showing in a very shining way how a Christian ought to play, and what should be his bearing towards other players. Once, when some one was quite unnecessarily rude and I was disposed to resent it, he checked me with, "Never give way to an irritable impulse." Here we have one of the rules of his life.

Another of my friends has come to say, "Do you remember the story of the Highlander who said that he never used swear words at all, at all, but that he knew every one of them? Well, you must show in your book that Grant had not even that knowledge. His ignorance as to *how* men sin was abysmal; and one reason was that, throughout his life, no one ever ventured to use wicked words or talk carelessly of wicked things in his presence. He was the cleanest-minded of men." I tell him that I

have said something like that, but to make sure I mention it here again.

Indeed, Grant had no interest in wickedness. He wrote: "It is nonsense, as far as I am concerned, to say that scamps are attractive. They are moral defectives, and I don't like any more to look at them than I like to look at a blotched beggar on the street. I would even go the length of saying that the superior fascination of the rascal, which is a convention of literary men, is hardly provable. The life of St. Francis is a thousand times more glorious and more absorbing to read than the life of Cesare Borgia; and 75 per cent. of people would rather read about Dr. Johnson than about Casanova."

Yes, there are also many other things.

And, regarding Struthers, folk say to me, "Don't forget to describe the light on his face." I cannot do that, for light cannot be described in words of human speech; but I can say that it was there, that I have never seen a face so lustred, so splendid. Heavy and sombre though his features were, there would befall them on occasion a transfiguration. Upon them an amazing light would glow.

The last time I saw Grant and him in a meeting together was at an "At Home" where Grant presided. And he, when calling upon Struthers to speak, and introducing him, did it in such a funny way,—teasingly, mischievously, overwhelming him with pleasant provocations.

Struthers, when Grant had made an end, stepped slowly up to the desk, and his speech was something like this :

> "When I was at school there was a master very fond of using the strap. He was so fond of it that he was always experimenting with straps, and if a boy appeared with a new strap round his books, the master would bid him take it off, and would handle it and examine it and swish with it. Then he would look round the class—'Norman Thomson, come up here.'
>
> "Up the boy would come.
>
> "'Hold out your hand.'
>
> "'Please, sir, I wasna daein' onything.'
>
> "'Hold out your hand.'
>
> "'But please, sir, I wasna daein' onything.'
>
> "'Hold—out—your—hand!'"

All this was said with inimitable pantomime. The gestures of the master and the despairing protests of the boy were all portrayed. Then he turned to Grant, sitting near him, and, with a wave of his hand, said to him, "Please, sir, I wasna daein' onything." While all the time his face shone ; he laughed like a boy ; his eyes sparkled with fun.

Yes, there are also many other things. I might go on writing longer. But it is time to cease.

Here, then, let us leave these men with their

graciousness, their wit, their melancholy, their charm, their friendship; not bidding them Farewell, even though this book ends here, like a song that falls on silence. For we are but a little way behind them on the winding upland road. It needs not that we say Farewell, for shall we not soon overtake them!

"Farewell the song says only, being
A star whose race is run:
Farewell the soul says never, seeing
The sun."

No, they are not far in front. They have passed — to be overtaken. "Tarry for our climbing feet," we cry, "O men we loved for your unconquerable Goodness, for your Faith, and your Lowliness! We desire to walk with you through these starry eternities. Stay a little, Grant, wherever now you be; wait for us, Struthers. We are coming swiftly across the dividing hours to talk with you once more.

'Stay, stay,
Until the hasting day
Has run
But to the evensong;
And, having prayed together, we
Will go with you along.'"

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